

ROAD TO WAR

WWII

COLONIAL CAMPAIGN

THE FIRST GENOCIDE

Germany's murderous colonial campaign, 1904

THE SECOND FRONT

Why was Churchill so against it?

THE ONLY SUPERPOWER?

British Redcoats face the Maoris at Gate Pa, 1864



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HISTORY

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MONTHLY

LEIPZIG, 1813

BATTLE OF THE NATIONS



How Napoleon's empire was brought down

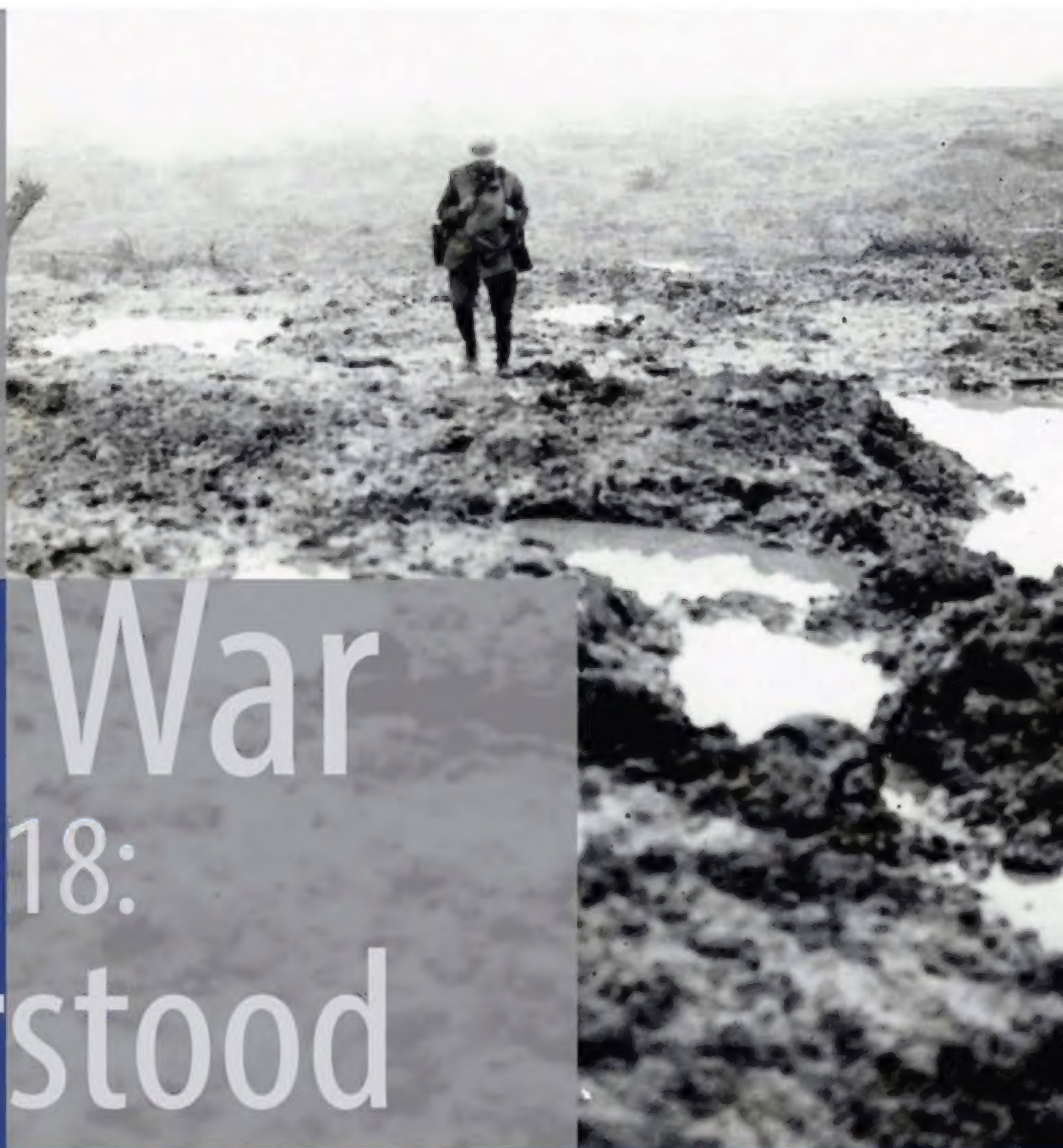




THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

founded 1980

the Great War 1914-18: understood



By the late autumn of 1917, the Third Battle of Ypres (more commonly known as Passchendaele) was a remorseless, bloody, grinding ordeal. Stout and resolute defence by the German Army produced a titanic struggle in the broken land - the mud - that was Flanders. Men, animals, tanks and artillery floundered and, often, sank into it.

The Great War is a fascinating subject, with a complex blend of military, social, science, political and economic history. To understand more about the 1914-18 period, and to decide whether Haig was right to fight and then to battle on at Ypres in 1917, join us at The Western Front Association.

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ON THE COVER: The Brandenburg Hussars at Mockern during the Battle of Leipzig.
Photo: Alamy Images

Who we are:

Military History Monthly aims to cover conflict on land, at sea, and in the air through all periods of history, with expert commentary written in an intelligent and accessible way.

Editorial Advisory Board:

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Welcome

By Dr Neil Faulkner



Why do we remember Waterloo but forget Leipzig? The answer, of course, is that Waterloo was a mainly British battle fought just across the Channel, whereas Leipzig was a battle of Austrians, Prussians, and Russians in the heart of Europe.

Both were great defeats for Napoleon and the French Empire. But Waterloo was a relatively small battle against a recently restored Napoleon. Leipzig, on the other hand, was almost certainly the biggest battle ever fought up to that time.

Half a million men, representing four Great Powers, struggled for four days to determine the fate of Europe. The total cost was almost 100,000 casualties. Fought 200 years ago this month, Leipzig fully deserves its epithet: it was a true 'Battle of the Nations'. Julian Spilsbury is our guide to the battle this issue.

On a completely different scale, but equally fascinating, is Andy McDonald's analysis of Gate Pa in 1864, when 250 Maori tribal warriors routed a far larger British army equipped with batteries of modern artillery. The British appear to have learned no lessons from this defeat.

James Stejskal also focuses on a colonial campaign, but in this case a ghastly atrocity: the genocidal war against the Herero and Nama people of German South West Africa in 1904-1907, part of our ongoing 'Road to War' series on pre-1914 campaigns.

The Remembrance Poppy is the subject of another feature this issue. Nick Saunders, a mix of archaeologist and anthropologist, offers a summary of his new book, out this autumn in time for Remembrance Sunday.

Finally, I conclude my short series on British Grand Strategy in 1943 with a discussion of the vexed question of the Second Front. Am I right about Churchill? Should a Second Front have been opened in 1943, even 1942? Let us know your views.

Neil Faulkner

Let us know what you think...

We would love to hear your opinions on this issue of the magazine. What are your favourite bits? What should we cover in the next issue? You can give us your feedback:

✉ **By Post:**
Military History
Monthly
Lamb House
Church Street
London W4 2PD

☎ **By Phone:**
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feedback@
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This month we have five copies of *Secret Weapons: death rays, doodlebugs, and Churchill's Golden Goose* by Brian J Ford to be won. Enter the MHM Quiz to be in with a chance of winning.

EDITORIAL

Editor: Neil Faulkner
neil@military-history.org

Assistant Editor: George Clode
george@military-history.org

Editor-at-large: Andrew Selkirk
andrew@military-history.org

Sub Editor: Simon Coppock

Art Editor: Mark Edwards
mark@currentpublishing.com

Designer: Justine Middleton
justine@currentpublishing.com

Managing Director: Rob Selkirk

Lamb House, Church Street, London, W4 2PD
Tel: 020 8819 5580

COMMERCIAL

Advertising Sales Manager: Mike Traylen
T: 020 8819 5360 E: mike@currentpublishing.com

Advertising Sales: Grace Biggins
T: 020 8819 5361 E: grace@currentpublishing.com

Marketing Manager: Emma Watts-Plumpkin
T: 020 8819 5575 E: emma@currentpublishing.com

Production Manager: Maria Earle
T: 020 8819 5587 E: maria@currentpublishing.com

Commercial Director: Libby Selkirk

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Lamb House, Church Street, London, W4 2PD
Tel: 020 8819 5580 Fax: 020 8819 5589
subs@military-history.org
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DISPATCHES



Our round-up of this month's military history news stories.

AN OLD LADY LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME

HMS *Onyx*, an Oberon Class submarine, was built in 1966 at Cammell-Laird in Birkenhead, and was considered a leap forward from the previous Porpoise Class, the first post-WWII submarine design. Oberons were noted for their clean-welded hulls, and for the first time in a Royal Navy submarine, plastic and glass fibre was incorporated on part of the bridge superstructure and casing. They were fitted with improved detection equipment and could fire homing torpedoes. Reliable and stealthy, Oberons were sold in large numbers to overseas buyers in Australia, Chile, and Canada.

Onyx was decommissioned and listed for disposal in 1992 after some 26 years' service. She was purchased by the Warship Preservation Trust in Birkenhead, where she was on public display, before being sold in 2006 to a Barrow-in-Furness businessman, Joe Mullens, as the basis for a Submarine Heritage Centre. This venture failed to get off the ground because of lack of grant funding, and *Onyx* was sold to Peter Davis. The boat has since sat in Barrow, waiting to be towed to the scrapyard.

Lying forlornly at Buccleuch Dock, her exterior looks a bit shabby and rusty. Internally, though, *Onyx* is in good condition. With some tender loving care, she could be the centrepiece of a maritime museum.

Onyx saw active service when she was the only diesel submarine sent to the Falklands in 1982. The 116-day war-patrol began with the 8,000 nautical mile trip from Portsmouth to the Falkland Islands. This was a feat in itself, and included what was probably the first submarine refuelling at sea from a tanker in 40 years. A complete 'false deck' of canned food and stores throughout the submarine reduced the headroom from six to four feet in some places; even the showers were full of stores. A 16-

man team of the Royal Marine Special Boat Service (SBS) and a mountain of their equipment were also on board. *Onyx* was deployed to undertake covert insertion and extraction of Special Forces, plus intelligence-gathering reconnaissance and SIGINT operations.

Because of their stealth, Oberons like the *Onyx* were regularly used for 'sneakies', or 'mystery trips', as they were colloquially known. This was the trailing of Russian submarines leaving their bases in the Barents Sea and transiting the Iceland-Faroe Gap to their assigned patrol areas in the Atlantic. 'Under-hulling' of new Soviet warships was also a strategic objective. Similarly, trailing Soviet AGI spy trawlers, which were ubiquitous during NATO exercises and loitered

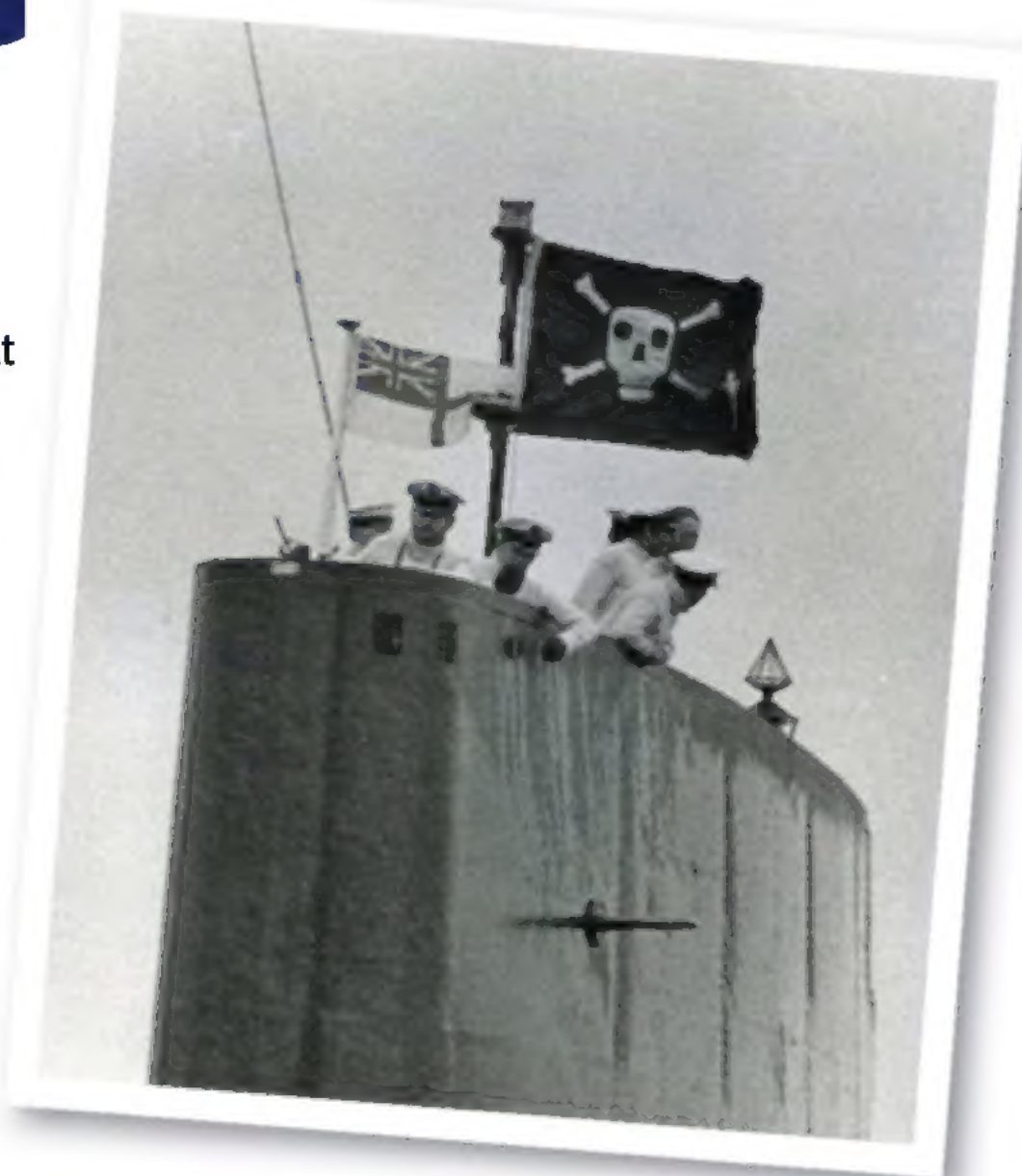
near operational ports, was carried out.

As she now languishes in Barrow with her future uncertain, a considerable number of former crew-members have begun to

lobby for her preservation. It is understood *Onyx* may be up for sale for \$100,000. From social media sources, it would appear that many former submariners are individually willing to contribute a considerable amount of money towards the purchase to ensure the preservation of this unique warhorse. *Onyx* was considered 'a happy boat' by former crew members.

There are also rumours of a Naval Heritage Centre, commemorating submarine history in the UK, to be built on the Clyde in two years' time under the stewardship of Inver Clyde Council. HMS *Onyx* would provide an appropriate centrepiece for such a centre, since she operated from the Clyde Submarine Base in Faslane.

It is now essential that the profile of HMS *Onyx* be raised. Her preservation offers a marketing opportunity to an enterprising organisation that wants to protect a unique piece of British history. HMS *Onyx* needs to be rescued now, not turned into razor blades.





WORLD WAR I WILLS

The last words of many of Britain's fallen soldiers during WWI are now available online. Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) has worked with Iron Mountain to digitise its historic archive of 230,000 WWI wills.

In the first month of the First World War, the British Government asked for 100,000 volunteers to step forward. The call-up for what was to prove one of the bloodiest conflicts in modern history was answered by 750,000 volunteers.

Before departing for the frontline, servicemen completed a personal, often handwritten will to keep in the pocket service-book that was tucked into their uniform. More than half of the soldiers would be wounded, and one in four destined for the Western Front would not return home. The precious documents made sure that the soldiers' estates were administered in accordance with their last wishes, should the worst happen.

The WWI wills form just part of the huge archive of 41 million wills preserved by Iron Mountain on behalf of HMCTS. The wills are being made available online in time for next year's centenary of the Great War as part of a larger project to digitise all war wills dating from the Boer War to the Falklands.

The wills of English and Welsh soldiers who fought and died in the Great War will be digitised and made available through an online portal, enabling members of the public to request copies of the documents easily.

John Apthorpe, Director of Business Services at Iron Mountain, said, 'The archive is not only a valuable source of information for historians, it gives the general public, here

and overseas, the chance to get closer to their lost ancestors. The original paper records are preserved for future generations in a secure, temperature-controlled environment. We have scanned everything contained in the pocket books so that people will be able to see the soldiers' wills along with any personal messages that the wills may contain. For many of the soldiers, these were the last words they sent home.'

As part of a 25-year contract with HMCTS, Iron Mountain stores all the English and Welsh grants of probate and wills dating back to 1858. The digitisation of soldiers' wills marks the first step in making the entire index available online.

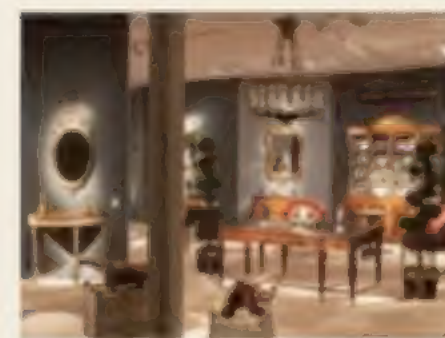
Courts Minister Helen Grant remarked, 'This fascinating project has opened the door to a whole new insight on our war heroes – it has given us the opportunity for the first time to hear the thoughts and emotions of the soldiers who died for this country, in their own words.'

'It is a great example of the innovation going on throughout Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service to provide a modern and efficient service to the public.'

Scanned copies of the First World War wills can be ordered online from www.gov.uk/probate-search



NEWS IN BRIEF



CANNON RAISE FUNDS FOR THE WOUNDED

Apter-Fredericks have raised £1,000 for the charity Walking With The

Wounded through the sale of a pair of 19th-century English cannon. The cannon, which come from the Nanteos Mansion, a Georgian estate in Aberystwyth owned by the Powell family for 250 years, are linked to the mythic history of the Holy Grail.

Walking With The Wounded raises funds for the re-education and retraining of wounded servicemen and -women, with the aim of finding them alternative career paths after they have left the armed forces. It is particularly poignant that the cannon were sold at Masterpiece London 2013, hosted by the Royal Hospital Chelsea, home to retired soldiers since the 17th century.



HEAR MY STORY

Restoration work has just been completed on the Grade I-listed

former Royal Navy storehouse that will house a new major exhibition 'HMS – Hear My Story' is due to open in 2014 at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. The completion of this building work marks a major milestone in the 'Hear My Story' project, which aims to give voice to the stories of the men, women, and ships that have made the Navy's history over the last 100 years.

The building work included construction of a glass link to connect Storehouse 10 with the existing galleries of the National Museum of the Royal Navy. This has created a new, larger gallery in which the exhibition will, for the first time, bring together the testimony of those who served in the Royal Navy through the 20th century.



NEW WWI POSTER COLLECTION

A unique collection of original WWI posters will be given a new lease of

life thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £51,300. Around 300 posters were collected by Inverclyde Council's McLean Museum during the First World War and immediately afterwards.

Assistant Curator Vincent Gillen said, 'From 1914 the secretary of the museum, Thomas Thomson, had the foresight to write to the high commissions and embassies of the countries fighting against the Germans and their allies asking for examples of posters. He was sent recruitment adverts and propaganda posters from Britain, France, and Ireland, as well as material from America and Canada. Some are very rare, and all of them are in near-perfect condition, as they were sent directly to the museum and have been safely stored away ever since. It really is a unique collection, and one that I am sure will be very popular when it is available online.'

The digital poster collection will be a key part of Scotland's commemoration of next year's centenary of the start of the Great War.

HAVE YOUR SAY



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VAGUE VITORIA

The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars are my principal area of interest, so I was pleased to receive my August copy of *Military History Monthly*. 'Wellington crushes Napoleon' the cover proclaimed – a somewhat disingenuous statement, but allowable under the circumstances of 1813.

What a disappointment to read the actual article ('Battle of Vitoria', *MHM* 35) and discover that, far from being a detailed and informed account of the battle, it meandered through a summary of the previous five years of the Peninsular War and potted biographies of some of the combatants, before giving brief attention to the actual battle. No detailed reference to Hill's attack on the Puebla Heights, only the briefest account possible of events at the Zadorra, and no reference at all to the bloody fighting at Gamarra Major or Longa's success at Durana.

Furthermore, there were several inaccuracies. The Chasseurs Britanniques may have had royalist officers, but many of the men were prisoners of war drawn from the length and breadth of Europe, many of whom clearly saw the regiment as a means of deserting and returning to the French.

Similarly, Reille's Army of Portugal is described as a force 'whose loyalty was as doubtful as Joseph's Spanish troops'. Here are two inaccuracies embedded in just a few words. The Army of Portugal was so-called because it constituted that part of the French army in the Peninsula which was to conquer and hold Portugal (although it had not set foot in Portugal since 1810), not because it was composed of Portuguese soldiers, which the words 'loyalty' and 'doubtful' seem to imply. As for 'Joseph's Spanish troops', they were the Royal Guard and other units that had been loyal to Joseph Bonaparte throughout.

Minor points, perhaps. But it is such minor inaccuracies that undermine the reliability of any historical writing.

It also tends to throw the reader when a military general, known commonly as the Earl of Dalhousie, and identified as the Earl of Dalhousie on the battle map, is introduced to us in the text as General Sir George Ramsay, with no connection made between family name and title. Similarly, we have an orderly retreat on page 24 and a disorderly retreat on page 26. The former references the retreat of Drouet, which was most definitely disorderly.

Let me add that I read *Military History Monthly* with great interest every month, and look forward to the coverage of events in the Pyrenees and South of France, as well as the broad range of articles which generally comprise your excellent publication.

Carole Divall
Lincolnshire



AIR-POWER IS NOT INDEPENDENT

May I congratulate you on the very perceptive first part of your study of British grand strategy in 1943. I fear you will be attacked, but you are right in what you say. I absolutely agree that air-power should be used to support operations on land or sea, not in isolation in pursuit of 'the indivisibility of air-power'.

As for Trenchard, an over-promoted major, bone from the neck up, it is amazing that people who should have

known better believed him. The Air Force's strategy has always been aimed, above all, at its continuing survival. Its advocacy of strategic bombing in the interwar years is a prime example.

To support his theory, Trenchard deployed Liddell Hart's views on the indirect approach, including the dubious 'unique selling point' that strategic bombing by shortening the war would make it more humane.

Harris was single-minded to the point of obtuseness. Two examples must suffice, but there are many more.

First, he refused to divert aircraft to the Battle of the Atlantic. How Harris imagined he could continue his bomber offensive without fuel, and the material needed to build bombers, had the battle been lost, he never explained.

Second, he was reluctant to take part in the bombing of French railways before the Normandy Landings, and had to be given a direct order to do so.

It is interesting that you open with reference to the Dambusters Raid. Dr Noble Frankland, the official historian of the Strategic Bomber Offensive, himself a Bomber Command navigator, is clear that neither the special bomb nor the resulting floods were of any importance; and that the raid was a failure.

What mattered were the low-level and master bombing techniques devised by Gibson and used by Bomber Command from mid-1944 onwards. (Frankland does not say, however, that the whole of Bomber Command's strategy was flawed.)

Major-General Julian Thompson
London

NORTH AFRICA POINTS MISSED

I enjoyed the article by Alistair Dey on the importance of the North African campaign ('Opinion', *MHM* 36), but also found myself questioning certain assertions and omissions of points important to the subject matter.

In the introduction it is mentioned—as if to justify the importance of the campaign—that it is 'misleading [to] claim that the Soviets bore almost the entire burden of crushing Germany.' To attempt to provide a strategic and military case for the campaign by understating the Soviet contribution to the German defeat is quite simply the wrong way to approach the subject. True, the Allies contributed massively to the Russian war effort in the billions of dollars' worth of military equipment and supplies provided through the Arctic convoy. But in manpower terms, it was the Soviets who withstood the might of the German army from the summer of 1941. In doing so, the Soviets suffered terrible losses but ultimately smashed the German army in along and bloody campaign, ultimately inflicting 80% of all German casualties throughout the war.

A few points worthy of consideration which were not covered in the main body of the article:

No mention was made of the state of the British Empire and why North Africa was so important in imperial terms. By early 1942 Britain had lost her empire in the Far East to the Japanese, arguably a little too easily. Hanging on to North Africa was therefore essential for British morale and post-war politics. To have lost Egypt and access to the Suez would have ended Britain as a world power, and probably destroyed all British confidence. Might not Britain and her Commonwealth Allies have sued for peace if they had lost North Africa so soon after the fall of Crete and her Far Eastern empire?

The loss of North Africa would almost certainly have ended Britain's role as a Mediterranean power. It would have resulted in the loss of Malta, and perhaps more importantly would have given the Spanish the courage to seize Gibraltar and enter the war as an Axis partner—something Hitler had already previously encouraged. As long as Britain controlled the Mediterranean, the Spanish would not join the Axis powers. And while Britain held Mediterranean ports, it could remain a great naval power in that region. Holding Egypt

was therefore pivotal to Britain and her Mediterranean aspirations.

The importance of the Balkans' relationship to North Africa was not mentioned. The Germans kept a sizeable army (much bigger than the *Afrika Korps*) in the Balkans because, until the Mediterranean was secure from an Allied threat and North Africa was conquered, they feared a Mediterranean-launched Allied invasion. Such an invasion would have threatened German access to Ploesti Romania's oil-fields, critical to the German war economy. The war in North Africa arguably drew more soldiers into the Balkans or resulted in them being stationed there much longer and in greater numbers than Germany initially intended.

Finally, Dey should have mentioned the American efforts in North Africa, and how their North Western African campaign contributed significantly to the defeat of the *Afrika Korps* in Tunisia, May 1943.

Jason Stewart
Ruisklip

HINDSIGHT BIAS

In his article in the September issue ('Grand Strategy: Bomber Command', *MHM* 36), Neil Faulkner is guilty of the post-war hindsight that has bedevilled rational consideration of the effects of the bomber offensive in WWII.

Contrary to subsequent popular belief, we know that civilian morale could be broken by prolonged bombing. I would refer Neil to Keith Lowe's book *Inferno*, which details the destruction of civilian life and morale in Hamburg in July 1943 under the repeated hammer-blows of Bomber Command and the USAAF.

Had we been able to do that to every German city in quick succession, perhaps Bomber Harris would have been proved right. But of course we could not. We did not have the aircraft, and we could never have sustained the losses of skilled aircrew. But that does not invalidate the theory.

For the real triumph of Bomber Command, I would recommend Max Hastings' book *Finest Years: Churchill as warlord 1940-45*. In it, Hastings sets out skilfully how weak Churchill's position was in the mid-war years. Stalin and America were both demanding the opening of a Second Front, even if it led to horrendous British casualties. Britain was simply unable to meet those

demands. All Churchill could do was open a Second Front in the air-space over Germany. What is not appreciated now is that there existed a very real fear that Stalin would do a deal with Hitler, that the Eastern Front would stabilise, and that Nazi Germany would then turn on Britain.

The answer to keeping Russia in the war and convincing America of Britain's resolve was a nightly bomber offensive, the effects of which would be exaggerated for propaganda purposes.

While it is easily argued, as Neil does, that Germany's production of war materials actually increased during the war, despite the bomber offensive, what is glossed over is the level to which production might have soared without the disruption of the bomber offensive. A million men were retained on the home front to contain the bomber offensive, with thousands of anti-aircraft guns and hundreds of aircraft. Without the bomber offensive might not those men, guns, and aircraft have been deployed on the Eastern Front, possibly resulting in a breakthrough, or even been used to prevent a successful Normandy landing?

We will never know, but my feeling is that the loss of those young men was not in vain. They did their duty and brought the successful end of the war nearer for their friends, families, and homeland. They deserve their memorial.

Bob Britnell
Canterbury



DIGGING FOR VICTORY

The human touch: stories of war and conflict from readers of *MHM*.

Susie Kearley is a freelance writer and journalist.



Susie Kearley talks to her mother about how war-time changes affected her family's plant nursery.

“When I was ten years old in 1934, my parents bought a plant nursery as an investment. It was seen as something we could all work on together as a family, build into a thriving business, and something that we, the children, would eventually inherit. We grew peaches, nectarines and grapes – delicious soft fruits that we all enjoyed, but the business wasn't profitable, and my parents had to sell off other assets to keep the nursery afloat.

Then everything changed when the Second World War began. On the first day of fighting, I was 16 years old. My parents were anxious to know what was going on, so they sent me down to the local shop to buy a newspaper. My brother Victor was working on the nursery.

There were big changes imposed on the way we ran the nursery. We had to be more productive, and maximise the space available to grow food that was in high demand. The government made us take out the peaches, nectarines, and grape vines, replacing them instead with tomatoes. We could grow more tomatoes in the space available, and there was greater demand for them, so we started to focus on tomatoes. We were allowed to continue growing

figs, because they could grow up against the wall, and we were allowed to grow lettuces, cabbages, and other high-yielding vegetables too.

One freezing winter-time, I remember, Victor and I were outside washing lettuces in the snow. It was so cold that we were wishing people would stop eating salad!

Poor diet

Mum managed the nursery while dad worked in the family shop in Eastbourne. She had two greenhouses built especially for growing tomatoes, and at meal times during those early war years, we lived on tomatoes with everything! We never bought any meat and had a very poor diet.

Those compulsory changes to our planting schemes, the stress of war, and the huge pressure to maximise productivity was all so traumatic for my parents. I really don't know how they kept on going! I think it was the work and worry that killed my mother in the end.

We had to grade the tomatoes, so we tipped them onto an old heavy curtain, and put them through holes to sort them according to shape and size. The tomato boxes were lined in tissue paper, and coloured to identify their grade. Then they went for sale in London.

One weekend, my brother planted about 2,000 lettuces, and I had to water them with an extended hose.



Top left Tomato-grading equipment from a folk-museum display.

Above An image of Brenda in early 2013.

Left Brenda at her wedding in 1948.

Imagine how we felt when the pigs from the field next door broke through the hedge and trampled them all. It was two days' work destroyed, and we were truly dismayed.

At this stage we were living in a flat above the family shop in Eastbourne, where we'd all grown up. But on Friday 13 September 1940, there had been a lot of bombing in Eastbourne, so my parents decided we'd be safer living in the run-down house in the nursery grounds.

We'd watched the bombs explode from the flat window in Eastbourne, and I was worried about my aunt and uncle who lived in the area where the bombs had fallen. We all went to the bomb-site to see if my aunt and uncle were OK. We had to break a window to get in, and my uncle Charlie had been quite badly hurt from flying glass, but he was going to be OK. He was taken to hospital and recovered nicely.

Moving to the nursery grounds

After that, dad said we were moving. He piled supplies into two trade bicycles with big baskets on the front, filling them with bedding, clothes, food, and other essentials. Then he cycled to the nursery, and unloaded, before returning to Eastbourne for the second batch. Mum, Victor, and I took the bus, and we carried bags of supplies with us too.

We had to prepare the house and black-out the windows, so we nailed dark felt to the windows. It was cold and damp because it hadn't been lived in for a long time. When my dad joined us, he made up a bed for himself under the stairs because it helped him sleep. He'd been shell-shocked in the First World War and was badly injured. He felt safer sleeping in the cupboard under the stairs than in the bedroom.

By the end of that year, my father had closed the shop in Eastbourne and taken all our furniture and belongings to the nursery. My brother went to university to study languages, but he only stayed there for about a year, because he volunteered to fight in the war.

I wanted to go into nursing at the age of 17, but my doctor said I was unfit because I had asthma and dropped arches on my feet. So I worked on the nursery that year. A year later, when I was 18, the doctor still insisted that my feet would let me down in nursing, but I ignored him and went off to train at Guy's Hospital in London in 1941.

Below Brenda's son Victor at the nursery in the late 1960s.

Right Brenda's mum, Sarah-Jane Goddard, who ran the nursery during the war.



CONTINUING PRODUCTIVITY AFTER THE WAR

When the war ended, people continued to maximise the productivity of their vegetable plots, for fear of another war. They wanted to stay self-sufficient as best they could. Different varieties of seeds became

available, and there was a proliferation of garden centres across Europe.

The nursery in Sussex continued to grow tomatoes because, by this time, soft fruit was being flown in from abroad. In the 1960s and '70s, Brenda's son, young Victor, who is now my husband, used to help measure out the tomatoes into different sized lots manually.



Above Brenda and her son – Susie's husband – Victor.

In 1942 my mother died from cancer of the stomach. I wanted to return home to look after her, but she wouldn't hear of it, so one of my cousins looked after her instead.

My dad took over the running of the nursery, and I returned home from my nursing training to see him and help out when I got a chance. In 1944, a V2 went off in the area, and the impact from the blast blew the front door open, and broke all the glass in the greenhouses. The blast broke the latch on the front door – not that we locked the house properly in those days. One day we came home to find a couple of soldiers having a snooze on the lounge sofa! In the 1940s you didn't have to worry about theft: there was a lot less crime around.

After the war, my half-brother and his wife moved in, and took over the running of the nursery. They lived in one half of the house, while my dad lived in the other half. I'd hoped to return to run the nursery with my bother Victor one day, but he was killed in the war effort, which was obviously devastating for us all. I got married in 1948 to a man called Charles, and we had three children, one of whom we called Victor, after my brother. In the years that followed, as a family, we all went to help on the nursery.

For years, I'd been terrified of the rats that hung around the greenhouses looking for food. At times we'd been overrun by them! I'd go down to the nursery, to tend to the orchids, and see these horrible big eyes staring back at me.

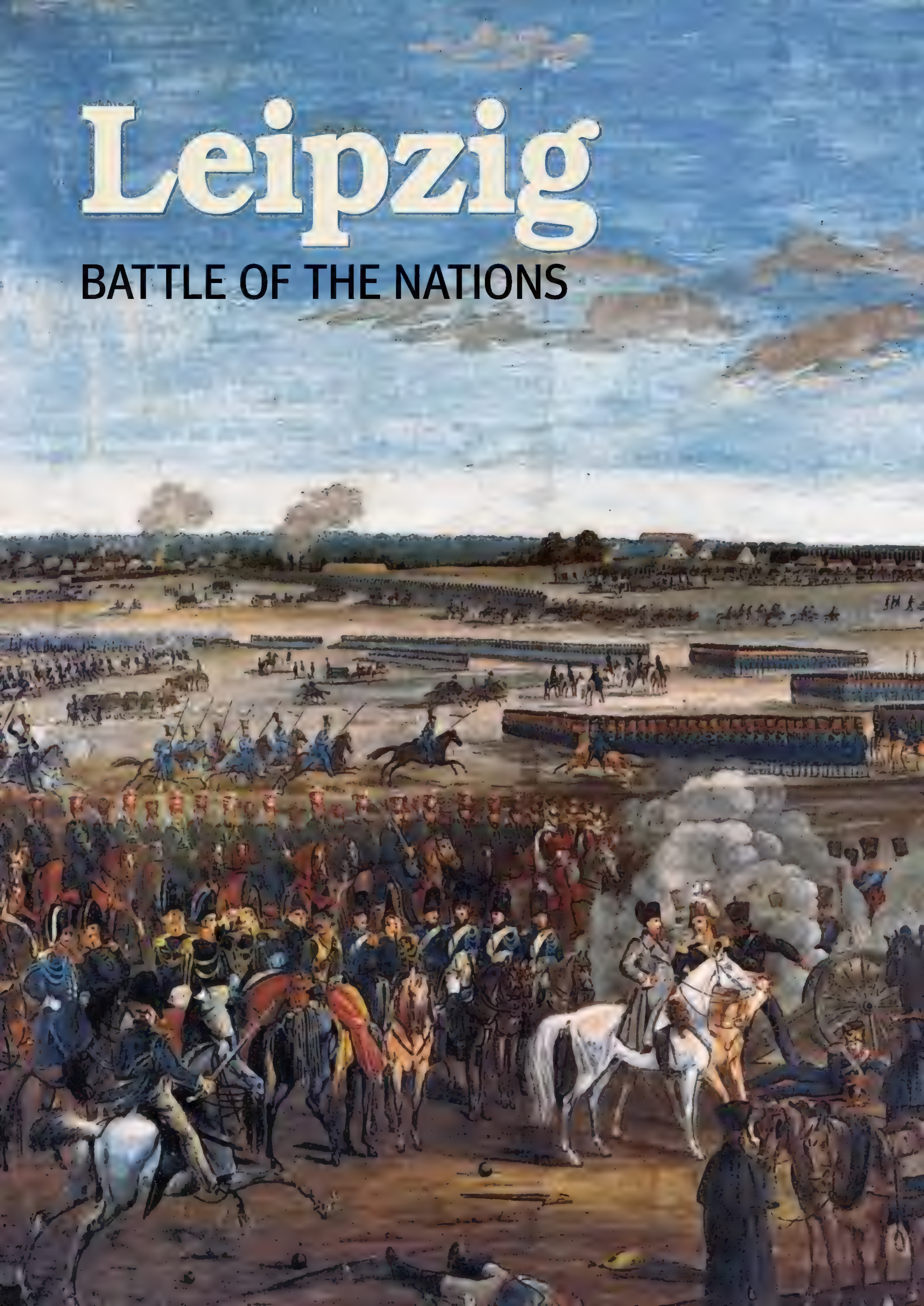
In 1968, my father died. He gave his body for research, so we couldn't have a funeral for another 18 months. By the 1970s, we had a cat called Tim who used to go rat-catching on the nursery, and loved every minute of it. I wasn't sorry to see the rat population dwindle!

In 1973, a captain offered to buy the nursery, and I accepted his offer. It was a productive little business by then. We'd started growing strawberries, and the strawberry fields were so productive that one day we picked a tonne of strawberries.

I always look back on those war-time years at the nursery with a sense of warmth and nostalgia. It was a difficult time, but our little nursery made a big contribution to helping keep Sussex self-sufficient at a time when it was really important that, as a country, we could feed ourselves from the land. 

Leipzig

BATTLE OF THE NATIONS





The greatest battle of the Napoleonic Wars, it involved three times as many men as Waterloo, reversed the outcome of Austerlitz, and ended French domination of Europe. **Julian Spilsbury** marks the 200th anniversary of Leipzig, one of the most decisive confrontations in history.

By December 1812, having escaped Kutuzov's pincers at the Berezina River the previous month, Napoleon was back in Paris. Of the 500,000 men he had led across the Niemen into Russia in June 1812, a bare 85,000 remained, many of them broken in health. A Sixth Coalition – comprising Britain, Russia, Spain, and Portugal – had been formed in June 1812. Prussia joined it in February 1813.

Napoleon's father-in-law, the Austrian Emperor Francis, was also thirsting for revenge; but he feared to strike. The reputation of Napoleon and the extraordinary military power unleashed by the Revolution still inspired awe. Had Napoleon been prepared to confine France to her traditional boundaries, peace might have been achieved.

But he was not prepared to abandon his empire – and, crucially, his position in Germany. By spring 1813 he had – with Herculean energy – raised a new army. It had been scraped together by calling up young conscripts, scouring depots and garrisons, mobilising National Guards and Customs men, bringing sailors ashore to man the artillery, and thinning out his forces in Spain.

On paper it looked impressive – 200,000 men – but in reality it was woefully undertrained. Napoleon's aide, Caulaincourt, called it 'an organised mob'. A particular weakness was the cavalry.

Invasion of Germany

In April 1813 Napoleon led his new army into Saxony at the start of a campaign designed to restore his position in Germany. In the opening moves, Napoleon showed some of the old genius that had deserted him in Russia, defeating the Allies at Lützen on 2 May and Bautzen on the 21-22 May. On each occasion, though, lack of cavalry prevented him from completing his victories.

There followed an armistice in June and July, during which Napoleon intended to train his young recruits. But it was his enemies who benefited most. By the time the campaign resumed in August, the Coalition had been joined by Austria and Sweden. The Swedes were commanded by Napoleon's old colleague, Marshal Bernadotte. ▶

Left Napoleon on the battlefield of Leipzig, a giant confrontation that broke his power and led directly to his downfall and exile.



Above Napoleon as he appeared later in life. Though physically in decline (he would die only eight years later), his brilliant mind was undimmed – and he displayed all his usual dynamism and aggression during the Leipzig campaign.

Napoleon now faced three armies: the Army of Bohemia under the Austrian General Schwarzenberg; the Army of Silesia under the Prussian General Blücher; and the Army of the North under Bernadotte. The Allies adopted a policy of refusing battle with Napoleon and defeating his marshals in detail. Bernadotte beat Oudinot at Grossbeeren, and Blücher beat Macdonald at the Katzbach. Though Napoleon defeated Schwarzenberg's Army of Bohemia at Dresden on 26-27 August, this success failed to raise morale among his war-weary army.

Captain Coignet, then serving as the Emperor's baggage-master, heard a group of staff officers talking after Dresden. 'This was a memorable victory...', he wrote, '...but our generals had had enough of it... They cursed the Emperor; "He is a _____," they said, "who will have us all killed"'.

Success at Dresden was followed by further setbacks. General Vandamme was captured along with 13,000 men at Kulm on 29-30 August, and Marshal Ney,

marching on Berlin, was defeated by Bernadotte's Swedes at Dennewitz on 6 September.

Napoleon now decided to cover the line of the Elbe, and at 3am on 14 October gave orders for a concentration on Leipzig. By now four armies were converging on that city: Napoleon with 177,000 men (with a further 18,000 two days' march behind); Schwarzenberg's Army of Bohemia from the south with 203,000 men; Blücher's Army of Silesia from the north-west with 54,000 men; and, from the north, Bernadotte's Army of the North with 85,000 men.

No one was in any doubt that the coming battle would decide the fate not only of Germany but of all Europe.

Convergence at Leipzig

Napoleon's arrival in Leipzig was heralded by the sound of cannon – to the south of the city, at Liebertwolkwitz, Murat was engaged with Schwarzenberg's advance guard under Wittgenstein and Klenau in what was one of the biggest cavalry battles of the war.

By nightfall on 15 October, Napoleon had concentrated 190,000 men and 690 guns in the city. To understand his situation it is easiest to imagine Leipzig at the centre of a vast clock. Napoleon and his army were at the centre – Blücher was advancing roughly between the 10 and the 12, Bernadotte and his Swedes between the 1 and the 2, and Schwarzenberg between the 4 and the 8.

Napoleon had the advantage of fighting on interior lines – distances, and therefore communications, across the city were shorter and easier than for the Allies operating around its perimeter. The main weakness of his position was that in the event of a reverse, his only route out of the city would be westwards towards Lindenau; all traffic – his entire army – would be confined to one road, which crossed the River Elster by a single narrow causeway just east of Lindenau.

With three armies closing in on him, Napoleon had no intention of waiting to be attacked. With Blücher 12 miles to the north of the city and Bernadotte 20 miles further north, he concluded that neither would be able to intervene on 16 October, and so decided to concentrate every available man to the south of the city to defeat Schwarzenberg.

His plan was to attack out of the city with 37,000 men to pin the enemy centre, then send Macdonald to envelop the Allied right flank, and finally – once their reserves were committed – deliver the coup de grâce with the Guard, Augereau's Corps, and one other corps (either Bertrand's or Marmont's). Any Allied forces to the north could easily be held in check by Ney.

Schwarzenberg's plan was to attack in the south with 77,500 men, and send a second force under Count Gyulai to attack Leipzig from the west, at Lindenau. Contrary to Napoleon's belief, the

No one was in any doubt that the coming battle would decide the fate not only of Germany but of all Europe.



energetic Blücher had every intention of attacking on 16 October, and it was his attack and Gylai's – subsidiary to the main Allied effort – that would unhinge Napoleon's plan.

16 October: early morning The Allied attack

At 7am on the morning of 16 October Napoleon ordered Marmont – in the north of the city – to take up a position in the southern outskirts to support his attack. During the night, Marmont had

been observing Blücher's campfires, but despite his doubts he started marching south. He had not been long on the march when Blücher attacked, forcing Marmont to hurry back to the village of Mockern.

Realising that Napoleon's southern attack needed someone to support it in the absence of Marmont, Ney ordered Bertrand to take his corps south. But as Bertrand moved, Gylai attacked from the west. Bertrand, like Marmont before him, was forced to abandon his

Above Map showing the disposition of troops at the Battle of Leipzig on 16 October 1813, the first day's fighting.

southward march to meet this new threat. All Ney had left to send south was the remains of Souham's Corps – but this under-strength formation never arrived, spending the day marching fruitlessly back and forth between fronts.

At 8am, the Army of Bohemia's attack to the south of the city began. It was disorderly and piecemeal. The ►

commander of the four Allied columns, Wittgenstein, decided to attack on a six-mile front which both weakened the blow and, crucially, made coordination difficult. The essence of Napoleonic warfare was concentration of force at what Clausewitz would later call 'the critical point'. For the fighting south of the city, Napoleon had concentrated two-thirds of his force, the Allies only one third.

16 October: mid-morning The Allied attack falters

It was not until between 9am and 9.30am that Barclay's four columns – 77,500 Austrians, Prussians, and Russians – hit the line of villages centred on Liebertwolkwitz. A large gap developed between the two right-hand columns, which invited a French counter-attack, but the troops who might have made it – Macdonald's Corps and Sebastiani's cavalry – had been delayed by the mist that shrouded the battlefield. Instead, Napoleon contented himself with fighting a defensive battle for about two hours.

On the Allied left, the Austrians under Merveldt captured the château of Dölitz, but were held there by Poniatowski's Polish Corps, while the Prussian General Kleist captured Markkleeberg but was halted by massed French artillery fire. In the centre, Prinz Eugen took Wachau, but was driven out again, and at Liebertwolkwitz General Gortshcakov walked into a trap set by Lauriston, and suffered heavy casualties from well-sited guns.

At 11am, Napoleon called up Augereau's and Oudinot's Corps and two divisions of the Young Guard to thicken his line, as well as all available guns, Murat's cavalry, and the Old Guard

to support his centre. It was unusual – and some noted the fact – for the Guard to be committed this early.

On the Allied side, seeing that Schwarzenberg's attack was faltering, the Tsar himself called up the Prussian and Russian Guards to take positions behind Prinz Eugen and Gortschakov, and messages were sent to hurry up the 70,000 Austrian and Russian reserves who were en route from Dresden under Bennigsen and Klenau.

Murat's cavalry got within 300 yards of the Tsar and the King of Prussia before foundering in the swamp.

Meanwhile, to the north-west of the city, Marmont was holding Blücher in Möckern, and to the west Bertrand had, by midday, halted Gyulai's advance. On both these fronts things had gone well for the French, but at the cost of tying down the two corps that Napoleon had earmarked for his effort in the south. Even so, once it was clear that the Allied attack in the south had exhausted itself, Napoleon decided to counter-attack.

16 October: early afternoon Napoleon's attack

His plan was for Drouot to mass 150 guns and blast a hole in the Allied centre. There would then be a general advance

all along the front, with Macdonald (supported by Souham) hooking in round the Allied right to threaten their rear and centre. At the crucial moment Murat would lead the massed cavalry forward and, supported by Drouot's guns, open the way for the infantry to drive the Allied centre and right off in confusion.

By 2pm, despite the fact that neither Marmont, engaged at Möckern, or Souham, marching back and forth through Leipzig, were present and Macdonald's outflanking move had not materialised, Napoleon decided to attack. As Drouot's guns poured fire into the Allied formations, the French columns advanced and Murat's 12,000 cavalry moved into place to deliver the coup de grâce.

Colonel Noel, a French artillery officer, saw the effect of Drouot's massed guns. 'His guns caused dreadful carnage to a corps of superb Russian Grenadiers. Whole ranks of them fell, but they remained steady. Threatened at one time by a determined charge of the Russian cavalry, General Drouot, with the coolness that never left him, pulled back the wings of his batteries and, sheltered behind the guns from lance and sabre, continued to pour his fire upon the enemy.'

Murat's cavalry drove back Kleist's column, smashing an Austrian cavalry brigade, overrunning a 30-gun Austrian battery, and riding down two Russian battalions.

16 October: mid-afternoon Napoleon's attack falters

Murat's cavalry had created confusion in the Allied ranks that Napoleon could now exploit decisively – but Napoleon was not there. Even as Murat advanced, the sound of gunfire was heard in the north. It was coming from Möckern, where – in some of the most intensive fighting of the war – Blücher's Prussians were now pressing Marmont hard.

A French officer described the fighting there: 'Besides the enemy's artillery, which was killing us at point-blank range, an imposing force of cavalry waited a mere 20 yards away for us to be put to flight, when they would spring on us like a tiger.'

At about 2.30pm, Napoleon was riding back towards the city – at the crucial moment when, by throwing his infantry reserves in behind Murat, he might have won the day in the south.

Murat had attacked where the Allied reserves were strongest. Now he decided to press home his attack over ground that

Below Massed Prussian infantry assault the French line.





Above French cuirassiers (heavy cavalry) at the charge. Though Napoleon's cavalry was unusually weak in the Leipzig campaign, Murat's corps mounted a powerful attack on the Allied line on the afternoon of 16 October. But Napoleon was distracted, and infantry reserves had been drained away by enemy assaults on other parts of the line, so the effort went to waste.

Right French and Russian infantry clash. Leipzig was not only the biggest battle of the war; it also saw some of its fiercest fighting.

one of his light cavalry generals, Pajol, had warned him was swampy. Some of his units got to within 300 yards of the Tsar and the King of Prussia before foundering in the unsuitable ground.

Two batteries of Russian horse artillery and the Guard Cossacks, supported by two Prussian cavalry regiments, then drove the French cavalry in confusion all the way back to Drouot's grand battery.

Meanwhile, the French infantry continued to advance until fresh Austrian reserves under Bianchi halted them, then pushed them back. Only the arrival of a division of the Old Guard and the leading elements of Souham's Corps stabilised the French front. By the end of the day's fighting, the French were back on their start-line. In the words of Colonel Noel: 'Napoleon's aim of routing the Army of Bohemia before the arrival of Blücher had not been achieved. We had, in fact, failed.' ►



Napoleon decided to fight on, but his situation was deteriorating by the hour.

17 October A day's lull

The day's fighting in the south cost the French 27,000 killed or wounded. Allied losses were 37,000 – losses they were better able to bear. The battle had ended in a bloody stalemate, chiefly through Schwarzenberg's skilful feeding in of reserves at the right time and place, and Blücher's and Gyulai's attacks in the west and north-west, which drew off Napoleon's reserves and, eventually, Napoleon himself. By nightfall Blücher's Prussians had captured Möckern for a loss of 5,600 – but had taken 2,000 prisoners, one eagle, two colours, and 40 guns, half of Marmont's artillery.

The following day, 17 October, there was a lull, as both sides considered their options. Having failed to win another victory like Dresden, now was the time for Napoleon to withdraw. But to do so would mean abandoning Germany.

Napoleon decided to fight on, but his situation was deteriorating by the hour – Bernadotte's Army of the North was approaching from the north-east, and Bennigsen's Russians were reinforcing the Allies in the east and south. Apart from his line of retreat to the west, Napoleon was now encircled: it was an act of desperation to fight in such a situation, with the city, and the River Elster, at his back.

18 October The Allied attack

At 7am on the morning of 18 October, the Allies launched a concentric attack on the city with 300,000 men and 1,500 guns. This – the biggest battle of the Napoleonic wars – has rightly been named 'the Battle of the Nations'. Even the British were represented – by a Congreve rocket battery, attached to Bernadotte's army.

In the south, the Army of Bohemia began a general advance over the same ground that had been so bitterly contested two days earlier, but after some initial success their offensive ground to a

halt. In the north-west, Blücher's Army of Silesia was fought to a standstill. But on all fronts the French were being slowly driven in.

At about 2pm, Bernadotte's Swedes, advancing from the north-east, formed up on the right of Bennigsen's Russians. Together they advanced and took the village of Paunsdorf. Napoleon retook it with the Guard, but was soon forced to abandon it once more, Ney to his right withdrawing too.

As the French withdrew, however, their Saxon allies were advancing – or so it seemed. Seeing Saxon infantry and guns dashing towards the enemy, French cavalry cheered them on, only to see them surrender en masse to the advancing Allies. In recent months their loyalty had been sorely tested, and by this defection Napoleon lost at a stroke a division of infantry and 19 guns.

As the fighting drew to a close at the end of the day, both sides were exhausted – the French line to the south of the city still held, but everywhere else they had been driven in. Their ammunition was desperately low, and casualties had mounted. On the evening of 18 October, Napoleon, on hearing that his Bavarian allies had also deserted him, gave orders for a general retreat to the west.

19 October The French retreat

At 2am the following morning the bulk of the French Army began moving out west, towards Lindenau, the Guard leading, followed by three infantry and two cavalry corps. The part of the army that was covering the retreat began to 'thin out' soon after.

It was not until 7am, by which time the French had been retreating for five hours, that Allied pickets began to take an interest in the noises to their front. And it was not until 10am that the fighting recommenced.

An hour later, Napoleon rode out of the city through crowded streets, crossed the bridge over the Elster, rode into Lindenau, dismounted at the mill there, dictated some orders, and fell asleep. If the battle had only been drawn, at least, it seemed, he was about to lead his army out of the threatened encirclement.

Traffic on the causeway and bridge was heavy and confused. One eye-witness described it thus: 'Ammunition wagons, vivandiers, gendarmes, cannon, cows and sheep, women, grenadiers, post-chaisses, soldiers – unharmed, wounded, and dying – pell-mell struggled together in

so great a confusion that it was all but impossible to continue on the march, and much less to defend oneself.'

A whole army retreating over one bridge is a recipe for disaster. Bridge demolitions are tricky operations – if the bridge is blown too late it is captured intact by the enemy; if too soon, a portion of one's own army is stranded on the 'enemy' bank.

At 1pm, the colonel in command at the bridge rode back into the city to ascertain which corps would be the last to cross. Shortly afterwards Napoleon, who had slept despite the gunfire, was roused by a terrific explosion. The corporal left in charge of the bridge had panicked and blown it, leaving 37,000 men and all their artillery, 20,000 walking wounded, 30 generals, and two marshals on the wrong side of the river with no means of escape. In an instant, a drawn battle turned into a French catastrophe.

Many, among them the two marshals, tried to swim the Elster. Macdonald got safely across with the cries of his men, 'Monsieur le Mareschal, save your men, save your children!', ringing in his ears. 'I could do nothing for them...', he later wrote. 'Overcome by rage, indignation, fury, I wept.'

Poniatowski, only recently promoted marshal, was already wounded and, like many others, was swept away by the river. Generals Lauriston and Reynier were taken. Many of lower rank were slaughtered by vengeful Allied troops.

Leipzig cost Napoleon 38,000 killed and wounded, 50,000 captured, and 5,000 defectors. Allied losses were approximately 55,000. The battle marked the end of Napoleon's German Empire – Bavaria had already switched sides, and Saxony and Württemberg would soon be forced to abandon him.

Napoleon had lost two-thirds of his army outside Spain, and his reputation for invincibility. As the Allied leaders met amid scenes of jubilation in the Market Square in Leipzig, Napoleon's army limped off towards France's border on the Rhine. Crossing the bridge at Mainz, one French officer looked back towards the pursuing Allies and remarked, 'We have done well to go all the way to Moscow, and bring the Russians back with us!' 🇫🇷

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julian Spilsbury is a former army officer and now freelance writer and military historian. His books include *The Thin Red Line*, *The Indian Mutiny*, and *Military Disasters*.

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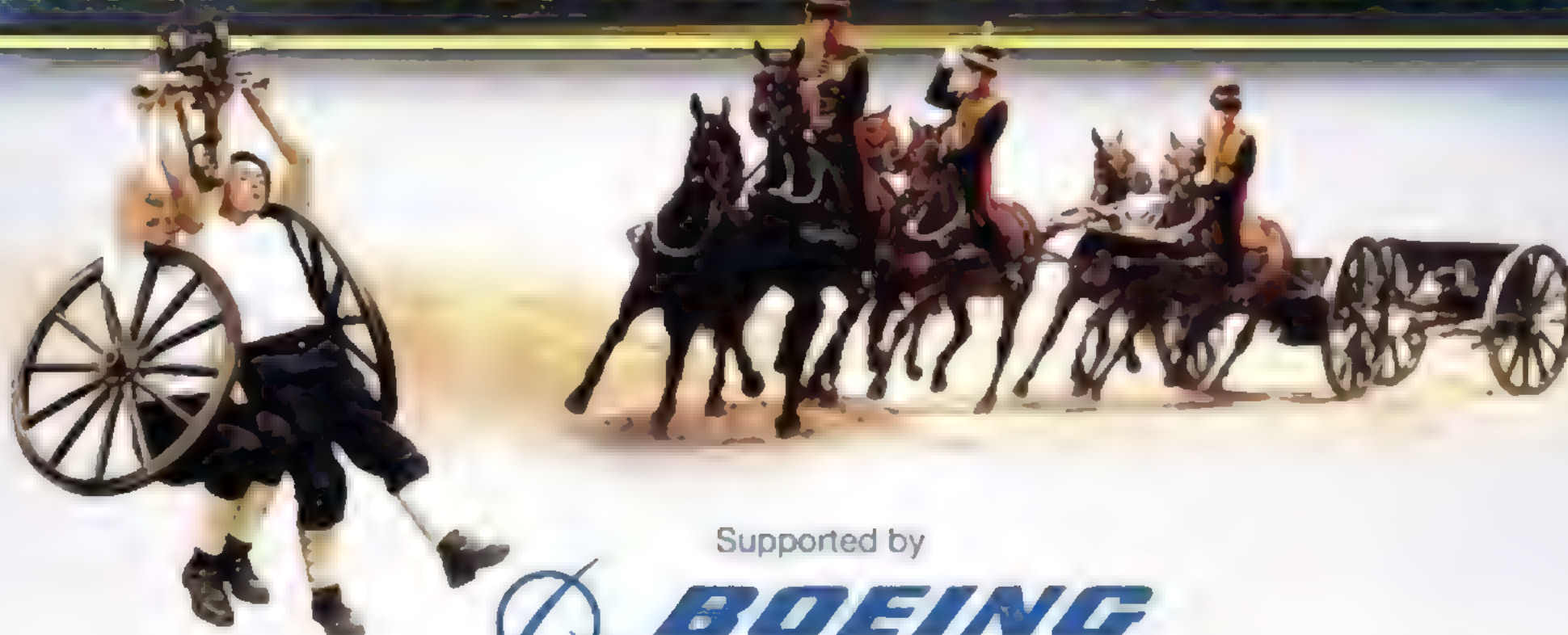
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ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT IS MISSING

Taylor Downing reviews the WWII bomber epic from Archers Film, the company founded by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger.

In the opening scenes of *One of Our Aircraft is Missing*, a Wellington bomber is seen flying low over the sea. We discover it is 'B for Bertie', whose return is overdue after a bombing mission over Germany. But there is something eerie and mysterious about the aircraft. When the film cuts to the interior, there is no crew. The Wellington is completely empty. *Marie Celeste*-like, the plane is flying itself with no pilot, navigator, or crew. The Wellington crosses the English coast. And then there is a terrible blast. The aircraft flies into a pylon and explodes in a ball of fire. It is a gripping opening to one of the finest British films of the war.

One of Our Aircraft is Missing, released in 1942, was the fourth collaboration between one of the epic double-acts of British cinema, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, and the first movie they made for their own company, Archers Film. Their previous film, *49th Parallel*, had been a huge success. It dealt with the story of six members

of a U-boat crew, stranded in Canada, who try to trick and deceive their way to the then-neutral United States, and safety. It was intended to generate support for the war against Germany among isolationists in the United States. It proved to be one of the few British films of this era to do well with American audiences. J Arthur Rank, the British film mogul who owned General Film Distributors and was just about to buy Denham Studios, provided key funding and made a lot of money from the film's success. He eagerly offered to fund their next film.

Powell had been taken by the phrase that was constantly read out by BBC announcers at the end of news reports 'One [or more] of our aircraft failed to return.' He wanted to make a story out of what happened to a crew who baled out over enemy occupied territory.

Right Actor Hugh Williams portrayed the plane's navigator, Frank Shelley, who was an actor before the war.

Left Promotional poster for the film.

Pressburger picked up on this, and suggested a film to show how local people living under Nazi occupation helped British airmen escape. It would be the obverse to *49th Parallel*. However, J Arthur Rank did not see how a subject like this could possibly be a box-office success – and turned it down. Powell and Pressburger were bitterly disappointed, but Powell made a bet with Rank that the film would succeed. Then he found funding elsewhere.

Bomber Offensive

In 1941, Powell and Pressburger had been invited to make films for the Ministry of Information. The result was a series of propaganda films based on their own stories and independently financed, but made with the full support and cooperation of the Ministry. Jack Beddington was the Head of the Films Division, and he immediately liked the sound of a film that would show how people living under the yoke of Nazi occupation took great risks to help downed British airmen escape.

During 1941 and 1942, although a land campaign was being fought in faraway North Africa, the principal British offensive against the German war-machine was the bombing offensive. Every night the people of South-East England and East Anglia heard the bombers heading off for their targets in the German industrial districts.

However, at this point of the war, the RAF had no navigational aids to help fly hundreds of miles across a blacked-out



occupied Europe, and the aircraft they flew and the bombs they dropped did precious little serious damage. After a Cabinet study found that on a moonless night only one aircraft out of 15 dropped its bombs within five miles of the intended target, Prime Minister Churchill suspended the bombing offensive in the winter of 1941. The losses incurred did not justify the small amount of damage caused. But, of course, the general public knew nothing of this, and for them the pilots who risked their lives nightly by taking the war to the heart of German industry were heroes.

The core narrative of *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* begins 15 hours before the spectacular crash of the empty aircraft, with the crew of 'B for Bertie' gathering for their next mission. The two pilots and navigator are in the Officers' Mess; the front gunner and wireless operator are in the Sergeants' Mess. But the crew for this mission will include an unlikely figure. The rear gunner was to be the 50-year-old Sir George Corbett, wonderfully played by Godfrey Tearle. This role was based on Sir Arnold Wilson, who as a 50-year-old MP had announced at the beginning of the war that he did not propose to shelter behind the bodies of young men and promptly joined the RAF to train as a rear gunner.

Pressburger was fascinated by the idea of a small crew of six men, one of whom was from a different generation to the other five. The younger men would probably have resented the presence of the older man in the aircraft, and have challenged his effectiveness as a gunner. However, when they parachute into occupied territory, the whole balance within the crew changes. As an old soldier, it turns out that Corbett had been lost behind enemy lines before, and he knows all the precautions to take. In the air, the five young crew members are the real professionals; on the ground, the older man is the most proficient and sensible. It is a nuance that is cleverly worked out during the film.

Powell was determined to make the film as realistic as possible. He did not want to use any background music, but instead to fill the film with the sounds of war. So, for the title sequence, he introduces each member of the crew at his station inside the compact interior of the aircraft. Using the shell of a Wellington bomber provided by the Ministry of Information, the crew members one by one introduce

POWELL AND PRESSBURGER

Michael Powell was born in Kent in 1905 and entered the film industry in his early twenties as a story analyst and photographer. He soon made his way up the ladder, and in the 1930s directed a series of films that were known as 'quota quickies' – low-budget, studio-based, quickly made 60-minute films to satisfy a government requirement that cinemas should show a specified number of British films alongside the Hollywood blockbusters.

Making 23 of these films, Powell soon learnt the craft of film-making. In 1937 he produced *The Edge of the World*, a film about the evacuation of the Scottish island of St Kilda. Using real locations and local performers, this film began to show that he had an eye for unusual visuals and an ability to turn strong narratives into powerful pieces of cinema.

Emeric Pressburger was a Hungarian who had worked as a screenwriter in the German film industry before Hitler came to power. He emigrated to Britain in 1935, and worked for Alexander Korda – another Hungarian émigré, who had taken over Denham Studios. When war was declared, Pressburger was classed as an 'enemy alien' and was threatened with internment, but influential voices in the film industry and the Ministry of Information secured his freedom. He first worked with Powell on *The Spy in Black* (1939). The two men discovered a creative bond, and worked together again on *Contraband* (1940) and *49th Parallel* (1941).

Although Pressburger wrote the original, distinctive scripts and Powell directed the films, they decided to form a 50/50 joint venture company together, called Archers Film, and to share a credit: 'Produced, Written, and Directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger'. Their creative partnership produced a string of great British films, including *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), *A Canterbury Tale* (1944), *I Know Where I'm Going* (1945), *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946), *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *The Battle of the River Plate* (1956). Their work has been revived over recent years, and is much admired by young film-makers today. *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* was their first collaboration as Archers Film.



themselves over the aircraft intercom, and their credits appear below. Each member of the crew will bring his own temperament to bear in the story that follows.

The skipper is the young pilot, John Glyn Haggard, played with characteristic RAF understatement by Hugh Burden. The navigator, Frank Shelley, was an actor pre-war – and is played by Hugh Williams. Bob Ashley, the wireless operator, was a professional footballer, played by Emrys Jones, who had actually been a footballer pre-war. Tom Earnshaw, the co-pilot, was a businessman from Halifax, played with a dour Yorkshire attitude by Eric Portman. Sir George

Above A Wellington Bomber similar to 'B for Bertie', the aircraft from which the six characters bail out over Germany.

Corbett, the elderly rear gunner who can only just squeeze into his cubicle, is played by Godfrey Tearle. The sixth crew member, Geoff Hickman, the front gunner, is played by Bernard Miles, who was establishing himself as a prominent character actor in British war films, usually playing an apparently dim yokel who turns out to be full of native wisdom.

The mission

The bomber's mission is realistically portrayed, with shots taken inside the ▶



Above Emeric Pressburger and Michael Powell – the pioneering British film-makers behind a number of war films, including *One of Our Aircraft is Missing*.

shell of the aircraft, in which all dialogue is heard through the intercom system. This is cut with air-to-air shots of a Wellington. As they approach the target of Stuttgart – apparently chosen because Powell had been there before the war

and hated the place – the anti-aircraft fire becomes intense. Unphased by this, the crew bravely fly on.

To show the bombing shots, a vast model of Stuttgart was constructed in the Riverside Studio at Hammersmith, the

studio where the first *Dr Who* episodes would be shot for the BBC 20 years later. It took a month to build the model, to create the special effects, and to film it. Here reality goes out the window as the factory, which is the objective for the night, is already shown ablaze and the bombs from 'B for Bertie' fall dead on target. No RAF missions at that time could have achieved anything like this accuracy.

Having dropped its bombs, 'B for Bertie' is badly hit by flak on its return journey. The starboard engine is damaged, and the radio is put out of action so the wireless operator cannot report their predicament. Eventually, over Holland near the Zuider Zee, the skipper decides the aircraft is likely to stall at any moment, and each man is ordered to bale out. In another realistic sequence, the crew members are shown one by one jumping into the night. They decide to rendezvous near a railway line they know is below. Five of them make it to the rendezvous. One of them, the footballer Bob Ashley, is missing.

Dutch resistance

Through the Ministry of Information, Powell and Pressburger were introduced to the Dutch government in exile in London and were guaranteed the full support of many Dutch exiles. The story that Pressburger sketched out involved telling how the Dutch underground smuggled the British airmen from place to place until they escaped out into the North Sea in a small boat. It was explained that facing such severe penalties for aiding British airmen, the Dutch were often suspicious of downed flyers, fearing they were Gestapo provocateurs trying to see who would support the British.

So when a group of children find the airmen, they are taken to a farmhouse, where the local English teacher interrogates them to see if they are genuine. Powell had asked Pressburger to write some good parts for women in the film, and he certainly did so. Played by a little-known actress, Pamela Brown, the school teacher makes the airmen feel unwelcome until assuring herself they are genuine. Then the locals treat them to a feast, and dress them in traditional Dutch peasant costumes, including wooden clogs, to the merriment of the boys in RAF blue.

In a series of scenes, the five crew members are smuggled from place to place over the next two days getting nearer to the coast and potential

UNDERGROUND ESCAPE ROUTES

Several escape networks were set up across occupied Europe to assist Allied airmen who had been shot down or had baled out – for instance, the 'Comète Line', the 'O'Leary Line', and the 'Marie-Claire Line'. It has been estimated that they helped between 5,000 and 6,000 airmen eventually to get back to Britain.

Some of these involved smuggling men, like the crew of 'B for Bertie' in *One of Our Aircraft is Missing*, across the Netherlands and the North Sea. Others involved getting men across Belgium and France, sometimes across the Pyrenees into northern Spain and then to Gibraltar. Most of the networks worked on the same principle: local helpers passed the airmen from link to link in a long chain, providing the men with food and shelter and whatever paperwork they needed as they were moved across the countryside. The members of each link were to know as little as possible about the other links in the chain.

The risks taken by these local underground groups were immense. The networks could be infiltrated by the Gestapo or by informers. The punishments meted out by the Germans were severe. The head of a household found to be sheltering Allied airmen would be sentenced to death by execution. The rest of the household would be taken away to work camps or concentration camps. If captured, the airmen risked being taken into captivity and spending the rest of the war in a distant PoW camp, probably in Poland. The French, Belgian, or Dutch underground workers risked a far worse fate.



Above J Arthur Rank, the influential British film mogul who provided a lot of initial key funding.

freedom. First, they are inserted into a group cycling across the flat Dutch landscape (actually filmed in the Fens). They are then smuggled into a church service that is raided by the German Army. In a tense scene, the priest – played by a young Peter Ustinov in his first film role – and the organist – played by Alex Clunes, the father of Martin – see off the Germans before the Brits are discovered in the congregation. Next, they are taken to the home of the local burgomaster, where a quisling nearly betrays them. Then, they are taken to a football match, where, to their amazement, they meet up with Ashley, who has talked his way into a local football team.

All six men are then transported in the back of a truck to the house

ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT IS MISSING

An Archers Film for British National Films. Produced, written, and directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. Starring Hugh Burden, Eric Portman, Hugh Williams, Emrys Jones, Godfrey Tearle, Bernard Miles, Joyce Redman, and Googie Withers. Photographed by Ronald Neame. Edited by David Lean. A Universal Pictures DVD.

of Mrs De Vries. This is another powerfully written woman's part, and passionately played by Googie Withers, whose mother was Dutch, but who had only ever played light comic roles before. De Vries is known to the Germans as an English-hating collaborator, as her husband was supposedly killed in an RAF bombing raid. In fact, he is still alive and working for Dutch radio in London, but this story provides a perfect cover for De Vries, who is thus above suspicion.

She smuggles the six men into her house at great personal risk. She is given the lines that sum up the determination of a subject-people to outdo

their occupiers. When the air-raid sirens wail, the local Germans run for shelter. De Vries relishes the moment, and says to her RAF guests, 'To an enslaved people, having it drummed into their ears that the Germans are masters of the Earth, seeing those masters running for shelter... that noise is oil for the burning fire in our hearts.'

During the confusion of the air raid, the six airmen slip away in a small rowing boat and head off to sea. But they are spotted from a swivel bridge (filmed at Boston in Lincolnshire) by a German sentry who shoots at them and hits Corbett. The

airmen make it to a German rescue buoy in the North Sea, intended for the use of downed *Luftwaffe* crew members. Here they overpower two Germans and call for help. An RAF rescue boat appears, and tows them back to England.

The adventure is over, but the film ends three months later, with the men once again preparing for action. Corbett has recovered from his wounds, and is back with the young crew – who now show him real respect. And this time the aircraft they are about to board is one of the new generation of four-engined 'heavies': a Short Stirling. The message is clear. The men have survived their ordeal due to the courage of the Dutch people, and now they will pay back the Germans in even greater measure.

The film opened in April 1942 and proved an instant success. It was nominated for two Academy Awards – Powell and Pressburger for Best Original Screenplay, and Ronald Neame for Photography and Special Effects. During the latter stages of production, Noël Coward had visited Denham Studios where the film was being shot, and was so impressed that he offered the entire film-unit work on the film he was about to begin shooting, *In Which We Serve* (MHM 30). After the film opened, J Arthur Rank offered Powell and Pressburger a long-term contract to make films. 'You were right and we were wrong about *One of Our Aircraft is Missing*,' he admitted. Powell had won his bet with the movie mogul. ::

Below A plaque in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, commemorating the Dutch Resistance fighters executed there.



The Second Front

The Second World War had raged for four years. The Soviet Union had done most of the fighting for the last two. Yet still the British would not open a Second Front. *MHM* Editor **Neil Faulkner** concludes his short series on British grand strategy in 1943 with a critical look at Churchill's preoccupation with the Mediterranean and the Far East.

Let me... make this clear, in case there should be any mistake about it in any quarter: we mean to hold our own. I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. For that task, if ever it were prescribed, someone else would have to be found, and under a democracy I suppose the nation would have to be consulted.

Thus did Winston Churchill bear testimony to his primary war aim in his Mansion House speech on 10 November 1942. It was neither the defeat of Fascism nor the defence of democracy – it was safeguarding the British Empire.

The rest of the speech bore testimony to that, for his subject was the British victory at Alamein in North Africa, the culmination of a military campaign whose primary purpose had been to defend Egypt, the Suez Canal, Middle Eastern oil, and the shipping routes to India. This victory was 'a new experience' after the dark days of 1940 and 1941. 'This is not the end,' he continued. 'It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.'

Yet it would be almost two years more before the Anglo-American invasion of Normandy; and that would be almost three years since the 'Second Front' had become an urgent political demand in Britain.

The Moscow line

It had not been the British Communist Party's finest hour. In June 1941 they had executed an extraordinary political somersault. From supporting strikes,

denouncing the war as 'imperialist', and talking cryptically about the need for 'a people's government', the German invasion of Russia had transformed them overnight into the most enthusiastic supporters of the war effort.

The consistent thread was the Stalinist leadership's slavish adherence to the Moscow line. They had been ordered to oppose the war during the Nazi-Soviet Pact, only to be ordered to do the precise opposite the moment Russia faced attack.

Churchill's primary war aim was neither the defeat of Fascism nor the defence of democracy – it was safeguarding the British Empire.

Right The popular wartime magazine *Picture Post* reflects the debate about a Second Front, advertising a yes/no pair of articles on its front cover of 13 June 1942. *Picture Post* was a left-of-centre publication with a large working-class readership. Tom Wintringham, here putting the case for a Second Front, was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and one of Britain's most prominent left-wingers during the 1940s.

On the other hand, the war was popular, and the Communist Party's new line transformed their fortunes. Battered by censorship and restriction before June 1941, and carrying the opprobrium of appeasement and even treachery during the Blitz, the Communist Party suddenly emerged into the light of day and, buoyed by its special association with Britain's new-found ally, experienced a surge of popularity. Party membership shot up to an all-time peak of 56,000 by late 1942.

'Second Front Now'

As the Red Army reeled in the face of Operation Barbarossa, staggering from one crushing defeat to another, retreating hundreds of miles and shedding millions of prisoners, Stalin called frantically for all possible assistance – especially for aluminium, planes, tanks... and a Second Front.

Backing for the Russian war-effort extended way beyond the ranks of the Communist Party. Lord Beaverbrook, the maverick newspaper proprietor brought into the War Cabinet as Minister of Production, used his *Daily Express* to voice support for the Second Front, and announced that the week of 22-29 September 1941 would be 'Tanks for Russia' week. Everything produced would go to the Eastern Front.

'Come then,' urged Beaverbrook, 'in the foundries and forges of Britain, in the engine works and the assembly lines, to the task and duty of helping Russia to repel the savage invaders, who bring torture and torment to mankind.' ▸

June 13, 1942

PICTURE POST



GIRLS ARE TAKING OVER THE
BALLOON BARRAGE (see inside)

**HULTON'S
NATIONAL
WEEKLY**

In this issue:

**SECOND FRONT: FOR and
AGAINST**

by TOM WINTRINGHAM and COMM. STEPHEN KING-HALL, M.P.

JUNE 13, 1942

PRICE 6d

4^D



Above A wartime Communist Party poster calling for the opening of a Second Front.

Productivity in traditionally militant factories soared. Workers chalked 'Marx', 'Lenin', and 'Another for Joe' on the sides of tanks, and slackers found themselves rounded upon by the shop stewards whom they were accustomed to seeing in battle with management.

Russo-mania was widespread. *The Times*, then of course a pillar of the British Establishment, intoned that 'Russia has astonished the world, and particularly the enemy, by her resistance... We cannot afford to neglect anything which may help Russia...'

But something was neglected: there was no Second Front. And the Communists, finding themselves on a roll, were soon chalking slogans and pasting up posters calling for a 'Second Front Now'.

'Germany First'

As early as January 1942, Churchill took the trouble to denounce the 'Second Front' agitators. But the movement grew, encouraged by Beaverbrook's *Express*, which organised a series of mass meetings up and down the country, often with the proprietor himself on the platform alongside socialists like Manny Shinwell.

In May an estimated 50,000 attended a Second Front demonstration in Trafalgar Square – a huge protest by the standards of the time (and, in the very fact that it took place at all, a measure of the popular-democratic character of the war).



This strange alliance between Fleet Street and the British Left was not the only force backing Stalin's demand for a Second Front: so were the Americans. Since entering war in December 1941, they had adopted a 'Germany First' policy, notwithstanding the fact that it was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that had prompted their intervention.

US military doctrine was solidly Clausewitzian. Top US commanders like General George C Marshall favoured concentration of force and massive firepower to defeat the main enemy. That meant the German Wehrmacht. Appropriately enough, they called their proposed cross-Channel invasion 'Operation Sledgehammer'.

Churchill, by contrast, was what biographer Roy Jenkins has called 'an incorrigible old peripheralist'. Critics at the time sometimes dubbed him 'Dardanelles Churchill', a sly reference to the ill-fated campaign he had energetically promoted in

Above The Arctic convoys played a key role in sustaining Russian resistance. Together with the Bomber Offensive and the secondary campaigns in the Western Desert and Italy, they provided some compensation for the Allies' failure to open a Second Front in France in either 1942 or 1943.

Top right The Russians were transformed from international pariahs into heroic allies almost overnight in June 1941. This photograph of Battalion Commander Alexei Yeremenko leading a charge in 1942 became famous.

Right The production war: a merchant vessel under construction in a British shipyard. Russia's entry into the war had a galvanising effect on many British workers, not least in some of the most militant workplaces, where the shop stewards were often Communist Party members.

opposition to the Western Front generals during the First World War.

A soft underbelly?

Churchill's strategic vision was flawed. The so-called 'indirect approach' – to use the term coined by military theorist Basil Liddell Hart in the interwar period – was a reaction to the carnage



Stalin called frantically for all possible assistance – especially for aluminium, planes, tanks... and a Second Front.

and stalemate of an industrialised war of attrition. It was an attempt to find a way round impregnable defences of the kind constructed by the Germans along the Western Front from late 1914 onwards.

Churchill, a convinced 'Easterner' during the First World War, had not only pushed the Dardanelles/Gallipoli campaign, but had also supported other operations in the Balkans and the Middle East at the expense of concentration of force on the Western Front. The idea was to 'knock away the props' of Imperial Germany by attacking and defeating her weaker allies.

The same strategic concept informed Churchill's conduct of the Second World War. A direct assault on Nazi-occupied

Europe was, of course, a daunting prospect. But that was precisely because it meant direct engagement with the main forces of the enemy. Peripheral operations in the Mediterranean, by contrast, involved campaigns against the Italians and only small German forces. Even spectacular successes in these could have no decisive impact on the final outcome of the war.

Particularly fallacious was the notion that here was some sort of 'soft underbelly'. That this was far from the case became obvious once the Allies had landed in Italy. Here was a military campaign of consummate strategic stupidity – an offensive up the entire length of a long, thin, mountainous country. Inevitably it became what it was bound to become: a slow succession of attritional battles from one strong defensive position to another.

The central issue remained unchanged: the war could be won only by confronting, defeating, and destroying the German Wehrmacht. An 'indirect approach' through a 'soft underbelly' was merely putting off the day of reckoning.

But the issue was not simply strategic. Churchill's approach made sense if the primary aim was to defend the British Empire and uphold Britain's great-power status.

A war for empire?

The indirect approach was convenient strategic cover for an essentially political project – one that ran directly counter to the interests of Britain's two principal wartime allies.

Stalin wanted a Second Front to relieve the pressure on the Red Army. Britain's rulers, by contrast, with their much smaller manpower reserves, feared a gruelling war of attrition and preferred to arm the Russians to do most of the fighting. This was a reversion to traditional British policy, whereby Continental allies had been subsidised to fight the French on land, leaving the Royal Navy and small expeditionary forces free to mop up France's overseas colonies. Thus had the British acquired India and North America in the 18th century.

Now, defending an empire in the epoch of its decline, Churchill employed the same basic strategy. The fall of Singapore and the loss of Burma had been terrible shocks. They had shattered British imperial prestige, given succour to Indian nationalists, and put the Japanese Army within striking distance of 'the Jewel in the ►

GRAND STRATEGY

1943

Right The Teheran Conference of 'the Big Three' in November 1943. Roosevelt and Stalin formed an informal alliance to force a Second Front on a reluctant Churchill. The body language is suggestive.

Crown'. The defence of India became a central preoccupation of Churchill. The 14th Army may have been 'forgotten' by some, but not by the Prime Minister.

The campaign in the Western Desert had a triple significance. The 8th Army protected the route to India, blocked access to Iraqi oil, and provided a strong military base for operations in the wider Mediterranean. Not the least of Churchill's concerns was that a victorious Stalin might thrust southwards over the Caucasus or south-west into the Balkans.

The three main Allied leaders shared this focus on the post-war period, especially after Alamein, Stalingrad, and the definite turning of the tide. But whereas Stalin's power depended on the vastness of the Red Army and its expanding occupation of swathes of Eastern Europe, and Roosevelt's on US's productive capacity and its massive output of ships, planes, tanks, and guns, Churchill, at the head of an industrial and imperial power in relative decline, was playing a far weaker hand. His, therefore, was a risk-averse strategy of manoeuvre, of ducking and weaving, of managing the stretch and strain on his nation's inadequate resources.

Torch

The conflict over the Second Front played out over three successive years, though it was at its most intense in relation to strategic plans for 1943.

Immediately after the May 1942 demonstration calling for a Second



Front, Churchill went to Washington to demand the opposite: that North Africa, not France, be the target of Allied landings later that year. While he was there, the news came through that Tobruk had fallen and 33,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers had passed into captivity. 'Defeat is one thing,' he wrote, 'disgrace is another.'

The fall of Singapore in February had signalled the eclipse of British imperial power in the Far East. That of Tobruk in June seemed to signal the same in the Middle East. This crisis of military over-stretch quickly turned into a crisis of domestic political authority. A no-confidence motion was tabled in the House of Commons. It was by no means certain that the government would survive.

In the event, the political challenge came apart in the delivery, and Churchill romped to victory with 476 votes to 25, having replied to his half-hearted opponents with a masterpiece of parliamentary oratory in the July 1942 debate. But it had been a warning shot. British imperial prestige had been damaged by defeats, and the Churchill government's authority at home had been tarnished. Some sort of victory had become a pressing political necessity.

The Bomber Offensive, with its impressive tallies of air sorties and inflated claims of damage done, provided victory of sorts. But better by far was Monty's victory at Alamein: a clear-cut battlefield triumph over an iconic master of war, and one which proved conclusive, allowing the 8th Army to drive all the way from Egypt to the border of Tunisia.

By then, of course, the Torch landings had taken place in Morocco and Algeria, Churchill having persuaded Roosevelt to back him – against the advice of Marshall and other top US generals. Allied military strength in late 1942 and early 1943 was thus deployed in a secondary theatre against a small fraction of the German Army.

Meantime, the Red Army was fighting the Battle of Stalingrad. Russian soldiers opening tins of American Lend-Lease Spam, which they called *tushonka*, would say 'Let's open the Second Front'. The modest Anglo-American contribution to defeating Hitler's Germany had become the stuff of sarcastic trench humour on the Eastern Front.

Husky

That the bag of German prisoners was large with the final liquidation of the Axis position in Tunisia in May 1943 is testimony more to Hitler's stupidity than to Allied strategy. His decision to reinforce a collapsing position could not have been anticipated.

The Allied triumph merely strengthened Churchill's commitment to a Mediterranean war. Tunisia became the potential launch-pad for an invasion of Sicily and then Italy, just as the Soviet victory at Stalingrad was reinforcing Churchill's anxieties about the Caucasus and the Balkans.

Marshall's suspicion was confirmed that Churchill's commitment to landings in France was lukewarm, and that in practice he favoured indefinite postponement until such time as the Wehrmacht had been so degraded that little more than



Left One of Britain's most famous wartime posters. But in fact Churchill was at odds with the Russians, the Americans, and many of the British people over the question of a Second Front.

a triumphal march from the Channel to Berlin was in prospect.

Operation Husky, the Anglo-American invasion of Sicily in July-August 1943, was followed promptly by combined landings on the Italian mainland at Salerno, Messina, and Tarento in September. Though the Italian Fascist government collapsed under the impact of multiple defeats, Mussolini was rescued and installed as the ruler of a puppet-state in northern Italy, German troops were poured into the country, and the Allied advance quickly ground down to a war of attrition in the mountains.

The Italian Campaign continued for two years. A central role was played by anti-Fascist Italian partisan forces. But for them, the Allies would never have reached the Po Valley. There was no 'soft underbelly'.

D-Day

Churchill opposed Operation Sledgehammer – Overlord as it became – until the very end. When the Allied leaders met at Teheran in November 1943, Roosevelt was committed to a cross-Channel invasion, and a tacit alliance formed between the US President and the Soviet General Secretary to impose the strategy on a reluctant Churchill. Neither the Bomber Offensive nor the Italian Campaign were considered adequate substitutes.

Roosevelt and Stalin would have been even more alarmed had they known of a secret paper Churchill had sent to the British Chiefs of Staff on 19 July.



I do not believe that 27 Anglo-American divisions are sufficient for 'Overlord' in view of the extraordinary fighting efficiency of the German Army, and the much larger forces they could so readily bring to bear against our troops, even if the landings were successfully accomplished. It is right for many reasons to make every preparation with the utmost sincerity and vigour, but if later on it is realised by all concerned that the operation is beyond our strength in May and will have to be postponed to August 1944, then it is essential that we should have this other considerable operation up our sleeves.

Above The hard underbelly. Polish infantry in action at Monte Cassino in 1944.

Churchill's 'other considerable operation' was an invasion of northern Norway – an Arctic version of the Italian Campaign. The kernel of rationality in this seemingly bizarre scheme is that it would have left the modest forces of the British Empire manoeuvring for post-war position on the fringes of Europe, while the Red Army and the Wehrmacht fought their decisive battle of attrition to its conclusion in the heart of the Continent.

D-Day was the battle that Churchill never wanted. 🇬🇧



Above The invasion that Churchill did not want: US troops wade ashore on D-Day.

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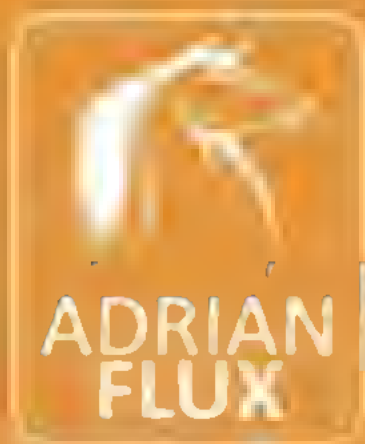
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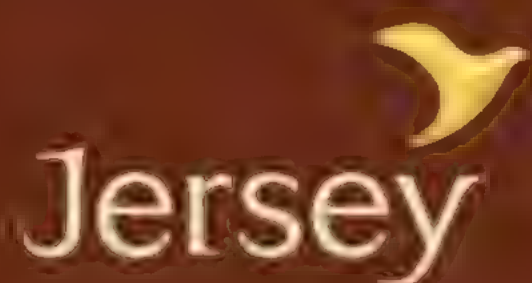
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‘Every Herero will be shot’

GERMANY’S WAR OF GENOCIDE AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA



James Stejskal reports on a murderous colonial campaign in 1904-1905.

In January 1904, Imperial Germany found itself embroiled in a ‘small war’, when the Herero people rebelled in the protectorate of German South West Africa, the land that is today Namibia. Then, after the Germans had successfully crushed one uprising, the Namaqua people rebelled.

The little-known events that took place during these rebellions have come to be seen as the 20th century’s first genocide. Nearly 20,000 German soldiers took part

in suppressing the uprisings, and they ended only after the death of between 50,000 and 80,000 indigenous people (the exact numbers are disputed).

Lieutenant-General Lothar von Trotha, the German commander, ignited controversy when he penned what has been called the *Vernichtungsbefehl*, or ‘Extermination Order’, a proclamation issued on 2 October 1904 that appeared to order the killing of all Herero – not just rebel combatants – and the driving of any survivors from the territory.

**Captured Herero
males were usually
shot or hanged,
whether or not
they were armed.**



THE ROAD TO WAR

Since that time, attempts to interpret the meaning of Trotha's words have resulted in much acrimonious debate. Here, I want to analyse the impact of the Extermination Order in the context of what actually happened on the ground.

The Battle of Waterberg 4 AUGUST 1904

Der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe (the Imperial Protection Force) under the command of Lieutenant-General Adrian Dietrich Lothar von Trotha closed in on their target on the southern slope of the Waterberg Plateau in German South West Africa (GSWA). The objective: an enemy force of Herero estimated at about 5,000 to 6,000 warriors.

Commingled with the warriors were about 20,000 to 50,000 non-combatant family-members and thousands of horses, cattle, and goats. The plateau, located in the north-eastern central plains, rises 1,700 metres above the surrounding rugged terrain, presenting a formidable obstacle.

Trotha had been in command since June 1904. The strategic plan had originated with his predecessor, Colonel Theodor Leutwein. Now, with available forces of approximately 1,600 men in two field regiments formed of 20 *Feld Kompagnie* (infantry companies), Trotha would finish the job. His force also included eight artillery batteries (30 guns) and three machine-gun sections (12 Maxim MG 08s), and Trotha could count on a reserve of three *Ersatz Kompagnie* (replacement companies), an artillery battery, and two units of native troops – the Baster and Witboois companies. The main manoeuvre elements would stay in contact by means of mobile wireless radio.

To destroy the enemy at Waterberg, Trotha deployed six combat groups to encircle the Herero. The plateau would block any escape to the north, and act as an anvil against which the Herero could be fixed and annihilated. Above all, he

wanted to avoid a prolonged guerrilla war. Trotha's order was clear: 'I will attack the enemy simultaneously with all units, in order to destroy him.'

Much of the later debate concerning Trotha's intentions stems from his use of the word 'enemy' rather than 'nation' or 'tribe'. Many believe that his orders at the Waterberg, as well as his instructions prior to the battle to build a camp suitable for 8,000 prisoners-of-war, imply that his aim was military victory, not genocide.

His later words and actions, as well as those of the colonial administration, show otherwise.

A deadly fight in the scrub

Preparations for the battle had started in June 1904 with the transport of troops from the coast, and the establishment of inland bases and stockpiling of materials near the plateau. The attack began on 11 August, with the main force advancing from the south to occupy the waterholes at Hamakari on the southern slope of ▶



GERMAN SOUTH WEST AFRICA - 1904

Left Encircled German *Schutztruppen* battle Herero tribesmen operating in dense bush during the Battle of Waterberg.

Right German South West Africa in 1904, showing the key sites mentioned in the text.



Image: © Carl Becher



Above Trotha's men manoeuvre 77mm field-guns into position during the Battle of Waterberg. **Left** The Waterberg today, showing a German war cemetery located near the southern slopes of the plateau. Trotha's plan was to trap and destroy the Herero against the barrier of the cliffs in the background.

the plateau. Other elements remained in blocking positions to prevent a Herero escape.

The Herero proved tenacious, as their commander, Paramount Chief Samuel Maharero, ordered a counterattack to silence the cannon. For nine hours the protagonists engaged in a deadly struggle in the thick scrub.

With their field of view restricted by the bush, the Germans could not engage the Herero accurately. Machine-guns were of limited effectiveness, and the artillerymen were unable to manoeuvre their cannon in the rocky terrain to fire on an elusive enemy.

Two German units, including Trotha's staff element, were surrounded at times, and the fighting was at extremely close quarters. The 11th Company Commander, Captain Gansser, fell early

in the battle, shot in the head, but he was not alone. Twenty-six *Schutztruppe* were killed and 60 wounded in the action.

German casualties were light compared with those of the Herero, however. Though the tribesmen were capable fighters, they were outgunned, having mostly obsolete rifles of mixed calibres.

When darkness enveloped the battlefield, the Herero slipped away. Trotha and his staff had failed to appreciate fully either the enemy or the terrain, and his hoped-for annihilation of the Herero had failed.

Pursuit through the bush

The official German history of the battle reports that the *Schutztruppe* consolidated their position during the night of 11 August, and prepared to make a second assault the next day.

Unknown to Trotha, however, Major Heyde's 2nd Battalion had failed to close the gap to the south-east.

The next morning, pushed by Colonel Deimling's 2nd Field Regiment from the west, the Herero fled eastwards through the gap into the Omaheke Desert towards the British protectorate of Bechaunaland. Others may have then turned north into Ovamboland and sought refuge among the tribes there. Nearly 48 hours later, on 13 August, the Germans followed.

They were soon forced to break off the pursuit and return to Hamakari, as the few waterholes available were contaminated with dead livestock. After a short rest, Trotha – still in search of the decisive engagement – ordered the pursuit continued.

The diaries of German soldiers who recorded their experiences told of horrific suffering and death. They describe the tracks through the bush between waterholes as lined with corpses, animal and human alike.

The Herero made a final attempt to deter the German pursuit on 24 September near the last waterholes before the Omaheke, but their attack failed and they again retreated.

Battalion commander Major Ludwig von Estorff, who was critical of Trotha's methods, witnessed the plight of the Herero refugees and suggested to the general that they had experienced enough punishment. Trotha responded that he wanted them completely destroyed.

Captured Herero males were usually shot or hanged, whether or not they

As many as 30,000 Herero survivors were taken prisoner and sent to concentration camps.



THE ROAD TO WAR



Top & inset Genocide in action: Herero prisoners are murdered by their German captors.

were armed. This was in keeping with the earlier orders Trotha had given in June 1904. Africans, including native troops operating with the *Schutztruppe*, later stated that the German soldiers summarily executed all prisoners – men, women, and children – testimony that was recorded in the British Blue Book after the war. *Schutztruppe* officers and men understood that ‘this dealt with the extermination of a whole people, nothing living was to be spared’.

Banished to die

With insufficient water, food, and fodder for his exhausted troops to survive, let alone pursue the enemy though harsh wasteland, Trotha soon called off the pursuit. He then ordered the 150km-long western border of Omaheke sealed off.

But even this task was nearly impossible to accomplish with only

two small units available. The rest of his army was badly in need of rest and recuperation.

The blocking force ran patrols both to intercept the Herero fleeing east and to prevent them from returning. This would continue until March 1905.

Despite the escape of a large number of the Herero into the desert, Trotha sent a cable to Berlin declaring victory. That said, what Trotha’s forces could not accomplish, the desert would finish. Hundreds, probably thousands perished. The Herero resistance was broken.

The British Magistrate in Bechaunaland would later report to the Governor of Cape Colony that fewer than 2,000 Herero crossed the desert to claim safe-haven. It is telling that the official German history of the uprising closes with the words: ‘Judgement had been found. The Herero ceased to be an independent tribe.’

Below The only known surviving copy of General Lothar von Trotha’s notorious *Vernichtungsbefehl* or ‘Extermination Order’.



The Extermination Order

Trotha was not pleased with his failure to crush the enemy conclusively, and remained unsure of the fate of the remaining Herero who had escaped him. As he was preparing to quit the field, he made one final gesture that would ensure his intentions were understood. At Ozombo zo Vindimba, Trotha had a proclamation read out to his troops and the Herero who had been captured during the final days of the operation:

I, the great General of the German troops, send this letter to the Herero people. The Herero are no longer German subjects. They have murdered and stolen, they have cut off the ears, noses, and other body-parts of wounded soldiers. Now out of cowardice they no longer wish to fight. I say to the people: anyone who delivers a captain will receive 1,000 marks, whoever delivers ▶



Above A postcard home. The image, one from a series of postcards issued in German South West Africa after 1904, shows German troops packing skulls for shipment from Shark Island concentration camp.

Samuel will receive 5,000 marks. The Herero people must, however, leave the land. If the populace does not do this I will force them with the Groot Rohr [Big Cannon]. Within the German borders every Herero, with or without a gun, with or without cattle, will be shot. I will no longer accept women and children; I will drive them back to their people or I will let them be shot at. These are my words to the Herero people.

**The great General
of the mighty German Kaiser**

This proclamation would later be known as the *Vernichtungsbefehl*. Two of the prisoners were then hanged, and copies of the proclamation in the Herero language were given to the remainder,

Below General Trotha (on the left, seated in front of tent) in his camp at Hamakari before the Battle of Waterberg in August 1904.

who were chased off into the desert. This was followed by an amplifying order that was read out to the troops:

The firing at women and children is to be understood to mean firing over their heads as to force them to run away. I distinctly take it for granted that this proclamation will result in no more male prisoners being taken, but also in no atrocities being committed against women and children who are sure to run away if a couple of volleys are fired over their heads. Soldiers must not forget to uphold the good name of German troops.

After military operations against the Herero had ceased, as many as 30,000 survivors were taken prisoner and sent to *Konzentrationslager* (concentration camps) at Windhoek, Swakopmund, and Lüderitz Bay – a measure forced on Trotha by Chancellor von Bülow.

These camps are often compared to Lord Kitchener's concentration camps of the Second Boer War, wherein 20,000 Boer women and children died. The major difference was that the German prisoners became slave labour, parcelled out to any commercial concern that paid the 'rental fee'. The railway alone required 7,000 labourers. Housewives could 'rent' women to cook meals and clean their homes.

The conditions inside the camps were horrendous. Shark Island camp in Lüderitz Bay was the worst. Living in ramshackle huts with little food, the prisoners had to endure freezing winds and fog from the Atlantic Ocean's cold Benguela Current.

Many of the dead, especially the rebel leaders, had their heads removed and the skulls scraped clean by other prisoners using shards of broken glass. Contemporary photographic postcards gruesomely record Germans putting the skulls of victims into boxes to be shipped back home to museums and researchers. In typically bureaucratic fashion, German military records show that 45% of the camp population died. At least 7,700 deaths took place between 1905 and 1908.

Aftermath

Ironically, the day after Trotha issued his proclamation, the Namaqua (Nama) people (then known as the Hottentot) chose to begin their rebellion in the south. Trotha had a new war on his hands.

The German version of counter-insurgency did not fare well in this campaign either. British Colonel Frederick Trench, who was assigned to Trotha in 1905 as military attaché and





THE ROAD TO WAR



Photo: © BundesArchiv

observer, sent his observations back to the War and Foreign Offices in London. He thought the German were obsessed with 'ponderous concentric attacks' and sweep-and-hold operations intended to fix and destroy the Nama. The Nama, however, would not cooperate by staying in one place and proved an even more difficult target than the Herero.

The war against the Nama lasted until March 1907, and cost Germany much in blood and treasure. It, too, ended with a proclamation from Trotha, one that promised freedom if the Nama surrendered. It was a promise to be broken. Like the Herero, the Nama were also transported to the camps. The promises made to the Nama were illusory and deadly. Colonel Trench would note:

Witboois [a subgroup of the Nama] were promised freedom when they surrendered, meaning only to build as they liked, but not where, still less to dispose of their time and persons as they liked. From the south, they were moved to Windhoek. After six months, several of them having run away, they were moved to Shark Island at Lüderitz Bay.

I have already, from Lüderitz Bay, reported on the exposure and lack of sanitation. If they still exist, it is not easy to avoid the impression that the extinction of the people would be welcomed by the authorities. I have observed, however, that a quarter-century

**Many of the dead
had their heads
removed and the
skulls scraped
clean using shards
of broken glass.**

Above General Trotha (seated centre) with his headquarters staff, including (then) Captain Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck (directly behind Trotha) and the British military attaché Colonel Frederick Trench (seated on Trotha's right). The photo was taken near Keetmanshoop around June 1905.

of colonial empire has not sufficed to teach the fact that a black man is a human being, and also entitled to having faith kept with him.

It was only through the repeated entreaties of Chancellor von Bülow that the Kaiser rescinded Trotha's order in December 1904. But even this did not end 'shooting the Herero'; it only stipulated that mercy be shown if possible.

While the outright execution of Herero and Nama males ceased, forced servitude continued and led to many more deaths by overwork, starvation, and exposure to the elements for all prisoners (men, women, and children) until the camps were closed in 1908. Colonel Trench gave his impressions in 1906, stating: 'The Hottentot are to be "permitted" to die out, but the Herero and Damara, who are good labourers and herdsmen, are to be retained in a semi-servile state, as farm labourers, etc.'

It is estimated that up to 50,000 Herero, 10,000 Nama, perhaps 10,000 Damara (who were often mistaken for Herero), and unknown numbers of San (Khoi-San) ►

peoples may have died in the uprisings. The Herero population was reduced by an estimated 70% and the Nama by 50% from pre-war levels, while the rest were stripped of their rights and condemned to lifelong exploitation by their colonial masters. In comparison, German deaths from 1904 to 1907 were around 2,000 civilians, officers, and men.

The German colonial counter-insurgency experience

Today, when guerrilla warfare or counter-insurgency operations are discussed, rarely does the 20th-century German experience enter the conversation unless as negative example. The exception might be the military career of Lieutenant-Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, whose guerrilla tactics kept several hundred thousand Allied troops occupied in German East Africa during World War I. But Lettow had learned from the tactics of the Herero and Nama – not those of his fellow Germans – while serving as Trotha's adjutant.

General Trotha was not an exception: a veteran of Germany's punitive expedition during the Chinese Boxer Rebellion of 1900, he had followed the Kaiser's exhortations to 'give no pardon, take no prisoners'. His understanding of warfare, like that of most German officers of the period, was informed by Jomini's fundamental principle: the use of superior power against the decisive point. For Trotha, the decisive point was the total destruction of the enemy people.

Trotha's predecessor, Colonel Theodor Leutwein, who had been governor of the protectorate and commander of the *Schutztruppe*, had the audacity to attempt to negotiate a peaceful conclusion to the Herero insurgency while at the same time leading a reasonably successful campaign to destroy the Herero military leadership. When Leutwein broke off an engagement because of a lack of ammunition, his superiors in Berlin were not pleased and relieved him of his military command.

Berlin's mindset matched Trotha's: rebellions could be dealt with only by force. Negotiations with the enemy were not part of the calculus. Leutwein continued as governor, however, and

would later have the good sense to resign in protest over Trotha's methods.

Trotha's controversial appointment

After Leutwein's dismissal, the Chief of the General Staff in Berlin, General von Schlieffen, persuaded Kaiser Wilhelm II to give General Trotha the task of completing the mission.

Schlieffen's choice was opposed by German Chancellor von Bülow and the *Kolonialabteilung* (Colonial Department), as well as many of Trotha's fellow officers. This was a reaction against his reputation for brutality, racism, and a by-the-book military mentality – a result of his service in German East Africa during the Wahehe uprising in the 1890s. As we have seen, Trotha would soon exceed his fellow Germans' worst fears.

Trotha received no explicit

instructions on the conduct of the war against the Herero; the Kaiser told him only that he expected the situation to be resolved 'by any means, fair or foul', and that he should report back on the causes of the uprising. This, and the Kaiser's earlier instructions for nothing less than unconditional surrender, accommodated Trotha's predilections perfectly.

He later wrote to Leutwein explaining his theory of counterinsurgency:

I know enough of African tribes that they give way only to violence. To exercise this violence with crass terrorism and even with gruesomeness was and is my policy. I destroy the rebellious tribes with streams of blood and money. Only from this seed something new will emerge, which will remain.

Below German *Schutztruppen* stand guard over chained Herero prisoners in 1904.





THE ROAD TO WAR

Schlieffen's endorsement

On 3 October 1904, the day after issuing the Extermination Order, Trotha outlined his intent in a letter to von Schlieffen:

Before my departure yesterday I ordered the warriors captured to be court-martialled and hanged and all women and children to be driven back into the sandveld [desert]. I believe that the nation as such must be destroyed or, when this is not tactically possible, they should be driven from the country.

Reading this, General von Schlieffen explicitly sanctioned Trotha's orders in a late November 1904 letter to Chancellor von Bülow:

One can agree with Trotha's desire to destroy the nation or drive them out of the territory. The race war that has sprung up can only be halted through destruction or the complete subjugation of one of the participants. Trotha's intentions can therefore be approved. He just does not have the power to make it happen.

The Kaiser's withholding of the authority to negotiate – which Trotha did not want – encouraged the German general and his *Schutztruppe* in their uncompromising violence. It should also be noted that many settlers supported violent reprisals against the natives, even before Trotha's arrival on the scene. The proclamation which Trotha issued after the Battle of Waterberg was, in effect, an *ex post facto* formalisation of an existing policy that was widely supported by both the German authorities and German colonial settlers.

Even the cancellation of the 'shoot to kill' order on 9 December 1904 was done not out of sympathy for the Herero but because of the negative public image it projected internationally. Thereafter the situation would have returned to the *status quo ante* had the concentration camps not come into existence.

Leutwein also believed (as did von Bülow) that a policy of extermination was not in the interests of the protectorate since the native people were needed as labourers. As such, he had sought to crush the Herero's military and



Above Namaqua women prisoners cooking at a concentration camp in 1905.

Right Herero PoWs-cum-forced labourers at work on a railway construction project in c.1905.



political power, while reducing them to servitude on established reservations.

History's judgement

It has been impossible to determine the actual numbers of Herero and Nama who perished, but a conservative figure could easily reach 50,000, and more liberal estimates approach 100,000. International opinion has since dubbed Trotha's proclamation and his treatment of the Herero and Nama 'genocide'. Germany's harsh administration provided the victors' justification for the dissolution of the German colonial empire at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919.

European colonialism invariably involved violence, exploitation, and brutality. What makes Trotha exceptional is his explicit effort to wipe out or drive out rather than subjugate specific ethnic groups. Claims that he merely sought a clear-cut military victory, and that he planned to leave the Herero an escape-

route at the Waterberg do not stand up to scrutiny. Tactical failure was followed by effective extermination of native populations herded into either the desert or concentration camps.

Actions speak louder than words. It is the cumulative effect of Trotha's actions, and the policy of the Imperial German government in backing him, before and after both the Battle of Waterberg and the Extermination Order, that tell the story. Trotha sought the complete destruction of two rebellious peoples who resisted colonisation – the Herero and the Nama. He and the administrators who followed him very nearly succeeded. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Stejskal was formerly a US Special Forces soldier and diplomat. He is now an active conflict archaeologist.

BEHIND THE IMAGE

WAR AS INSPIRATION

Conflict has long been a muse for artists and photographers. From Elizabeth Thompson's vivid depictions of Napoleonic battlefields to Don McCullin's haunting, violent encapsulations of the Vietnam War, scenes of battle continue to fascinate and inspire.

A new exhibition at the Imperial War Museum North will explore how war has been a crucial subject for contemporary artists in the last two decades. *Catalyst: Contemporary Art and War* will study the rich and varied artistic response to conflict in the media age, the ways in which art can prompt us to think more deeply about current events, their immediate impact, and their long-term implications.

The media has become an acknowledged weapon of battle. As our understanding of war is increasingly shaped by the media, how does art prompt us to consider the way our perceptions of conflict are influenced?

Artists are often driven by their own experiences, political views, or a desire to protest. Taysir Batniji's series of estate-agent details for destroyed homes in Gaza, for example, is a tongue-in-cheek comment on the situation in Palestine. Some artists aim to counter common opinions, while others explore the legacy of their own family history, or the long-term impact of conflict. Willie Doherty's photograph *Unapproved Road*, showing a rural makeshift roadblock, suggests a violent past event and reminds us of the significance of land and territory in Northern Ireland during the Troubles.

To celebrate the launch of this major new exhibition, *MHM* here features six of the 70 works of art that will be on display.

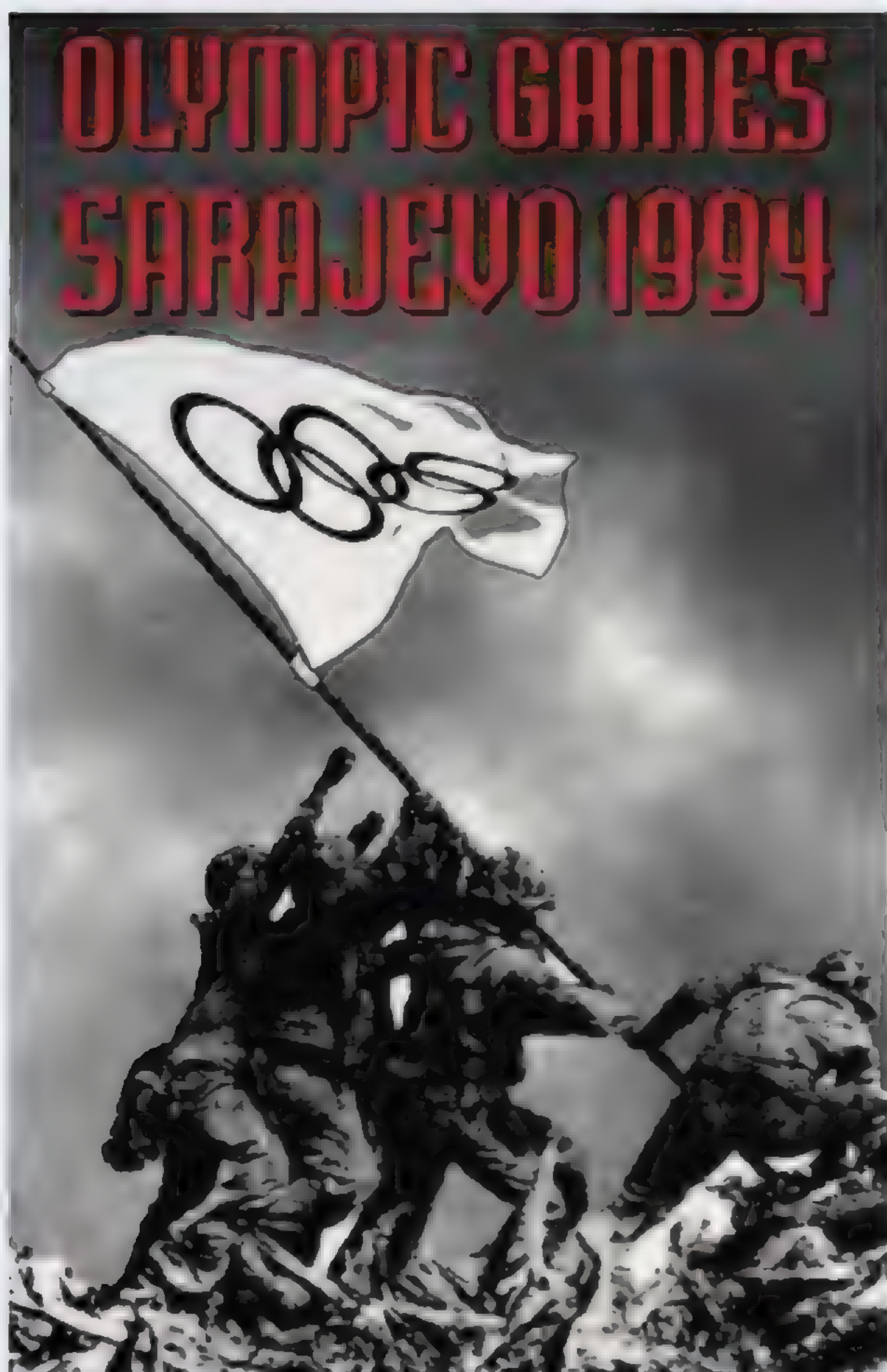
***Catalyst: Contemporary Art and War*
will run from 12 October 2013-23 February 2014.**



Jack Milroy Blast

Glasgow-born Milroy has worked with a range of found materials, especially books, maps, and printed ephemera. He has produced a number of exploding bookworks, such as the one pictured. Milroy says that he avoids too close an examination of his artistic motivations, in case it makes his work too literal. His playful creations often rely on a sense of surrealism and serendipity. Influenced by Pop Art, here his minimal intervention transforms the dry technical detail of this book into an explosion of the weapons that lay dormant between its covers.





Trio Sarajevo Olympic Games Sarajevo 1994

Trio Sarajevo are a design practice made up of husband and wife Bojan and Dalida Hadžihalilović, and their collaborator Leila Hatt-Mulabegović. When war broke out in Bosnia in 1992, Trio found themselves trapped in the four-year siege of Sarajevo. Isolated, they produced a series of darkly humorous postcards, drawing attention to the plight of the city and satirising icons of art, film, and advertising such as the Coca-Cola logo, the *Mona Lisa*, Marilyn Monroe, and – as here – the US flag being raised at Iwo Jima. The Olympics were a frequent theme in the series. In 1984, visitors had flocked to the Sarajevo Winter Olympics, but ten years later the city felt abandoned by the world. The postcard format was chosen for its portability, but later many designs were remade as posters.

John Keane

Death Squad, 1991

In 1990 Keane was commissioned as the IWM's official recorder in the Gulf, just before the fighting began in January 1991. At the time some critics suggested that an artist could not add to our understanding of a conflict already widely represented in the media. Others argued that the media coverage liberated Keane from the responsibility of producing an official record of the war; instead he was free to respond to events in a more personal and subjective way. His work was a characteristically cynical take on power, consumerism, technology, and the media, often emphasising the dislocation of his experiences. The ambiguously titled *Death Squad* shows a group of soldiers carrying a body bag, their sunglasses and scarves serving to conceal any emotion or expression.



Angus Boulton Cinema Mural, Kramnitz

Between 1998 and 2006, Angus Boulton took a series of photographs at Soviet military bases in and around Berlin. Abandoned when Soviet forces left East Germany, many were soon to be demolished. The sites stand not only as witnesses to the activities of their former inhabitants, but also as a manifestation of a belief system, its downfall, and its disappearing legacy.

BEHIND THE IMAGE



Frauke Eigen Fundstücke Kosovo 2000 – Jacke

German artist Frauke Eigen travelled to Kosovo in 2000, shortly after the end of the 16-month war there. She heard that a mass grave containing the bodies of genocide victims was being uncovered near where she was working. Although Eigen was in Kosovo working as a photo-journalist, here she adopted a different approach. Witnessing the recovery operation, she was struck by the power of the personal possessions removed from the grave, and the strong sense they gave of their owners' absence. She intentionally avoids graphic imagery in her photographs and leaves it to the viewer to complete the story.

John Timberlake Another Country XV

Timberlake's *Another Country* series began with a painted backdrop, combining well-known Romantic landscapes by Turner or Constable with nuclear mushroom-clouds, taken from sources in IWM's archives. He then constructed models with plastic spectators and photographed the resulting diorama. Through the photographs he explores ideas about landscape and the modern-day 'sublime', a term used to describe entities that are both terrifying and awe-inspiring. These qualities of scale, drama, shock, and spectacle are features that are increasingly seen in the media's portrayal of contemporary conflict. Here the cloud is both toxic and fascinating, almost beautiful. The multiple layers in the work remove us from the event, leaving us as passive spectators, simultaneously seduced and disturbed.



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Maori Dawn

THE BATTLE OF GATE PA: 1864



Andy McDonald recalls a colonial battle during the New Zealand Wars – and the lessons the British Army failed to learn.

Above The British attack on Rangiriri in 1864. The Maoris built strong hilltop fortresses formed of trenches, palisades, and even shell-proof bunkers during their 19th-century campaigns of resistance to British colonial authority.

In the words of *The Times* of 14 July 1864, it was ‘a disaster of a peculiarly disgraceful and perhaps unprecedented sort’. ‘A scene unparalleled in British military annals’, it continued, describing how ‘a British regiment had fled in terror... having been beaten in hand-to-hand conflict with a horde of savages’.

‘Disgrace. Reproach. Humiliation’ encapsulated the correspondent’s

reaction to the loss suffered by the British Army at the hands of what he called ‘half-naked, half-armed savages’ in New Zealand.

Fifteen years before the British Army’s débâcle at Isandlwana, they had been handed this defeat by Kingite Maoris fighting for their independence.

Far from home

The New Zealand Wars lasted from 1845 to 1872, and rank among the



The Maoris were aided in their efforts by an ingenious defensive creation: the modern *pa*.

Above A Maori attack on a European settlement. British colonial claims to authority over Maori tribal land triggered a series of wars between the native population and the white settlers.

that he and his comrades were fighting a long way from home, for someone else's benefit, in very dangerous and uncomfortable conditions.

Initially, it appeared that the Maoris must be impossibly outmatched. Estimates reveal that their total population never exceeded 60,000. At the height of the conflict, the British commitment rose to 18,000 soldiers, one for every three Maoris, and if one discounts non-combatants and 'friendlies', the figure is most likely reversed: three British soldiers against every Maori warrior. The Maoris, moreover, lacked artillery and other modern weaponry, and their tribal socio-economic structure prevented them from sustaining forces in the field for long periods – that is, they had no standing army. ▸

least analysed of Britain's 19th-century colonial conflicts. In many respects they epitomised Britain's military strengths and weaknesses. No other nation could have waged such lengthy campaigns at the opposite end of the earth, and they bear witness to the global logistical capabilities of the post-Crimean army and navy.

Yet they also bear the hallmarks of British colonial racism, the idea that the 'noble savage' could not match the

technology, ingenuity, or enterprise of the world's only superpower. It was a line of thinking that was to be rudely interrupted at Gate Pa and on other Maori battlefields.

In nature, the New Zealand Wars were rather like the later American experience in Vietnam. There were 'friendly' and 'hostile' factions that looked and dressed identically. The terrain was most often densely bush-clad hills. It rained a lot. To the ordinary British soldier, it seemed

MAORI WARRIORS



Above A Maori warrior being tattooed to show his rank, status, and masculinity.

Above right A traditional Maori dwelling of the mid 19th century.



Above A ritual battle challenge. Though this is a traditional tribal practice, the Maoris were in many respects 'modern' opponents, belying the racist stereotyping to which they were subject. They dug deep entrenchments, were equipped with firearms, and displayed exceptional cunning, ingenuity, and flexibility in their campaigns against far superior numbers of regular European troops.

The conflicts were also limited in their aims, with neither side wanting to eradicate the other: the New Zealand Wars were struggles for dominance, not annihilation. The Maoris had welcomed Europeans to their shores, realising that through trade they could acquire the trappings of modernity. The Maoris had no metalworking capacity, so iron goods like cooking pots were invaluable, and Maoris became as reliable consumers as the average British household. In return, they offered food, labour and, of course, land.

After the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, the chief cause of conflict became the interpretation of sovereignty. Although a number of mission-educated Maoris spoke English, many did not, necessitating two versions of the treaty, each containing a different understanding of paramount authority. The British understanding was that the Crown had complete sovereignty over the whole country. But this was not spelled out in the Maori version, and the native people continued to believe that they retained authority over their own lands, even while enjoying the benefits of the European presence.

Tensions boil over

British settlement in the North Island was limited mainly to four areas around the ports of Auckland, New Plymouth, Wanganui, and Wellington, the sizes of which were increased by constant

purchases of land from local Maoris. Inland regions were very much Maori territory, subject to traditional methods of control, a situation that was at first accepted by the substantially lesser number of Europeans.

As the British population increased, however, so too did the white settlers' desire to impose Crown control. They

naturally assumed that this must be superior to the traditional Maori tribal system.

Some historians have explained the conflict as resulting from a Maori desire to stem an avalanche of land purchases. While it is true that arguments over who had the authority to sell land sparked armed clashes, the real cause of hostilities was disagreement over who

had the authority to decide.

In the late 1850s, several tribes created a confederation known as the 'King Movement'. This had its greatest support in the mid North Island Waikato region, an area that lay directly between the largest of the British settlements in Auckland and Taranaki.

In 1860, war broke out in Taranaki around the settlement of New Plymouth. Though a local conflict, sparked by local grievances, the Taranaki Maoris were quickly aided by Kingites from the Waikato.

Trenches

The British found it very hard to counter their hit-and-run tactics. The Taranaki War raged for a year, and ended in bitter stalemate, with neither side capable of outright victory. The British sought to dominate through force of arms and firepower, but were not numerous enough to trap the evasive Maoris, who showed a preference for waiting in well-prepared defensive positions that they would abandon once superior British firepower began to tell. They were aided in their efforts by an ingenious defensive creation: the modern *pa*.

The Maoris, always outnumbered and outgunned, could not halt the British advance.

This was, in effect, a World War I-style trench system that could be quickly and deeply dug out of the fertile soil, and proved remarkably effective at protecting defenders from even the heaviest artillery bombardment. *Pas* were sited on dominant heights, making them difficult to flank. The attacker often faced inaccessible cliffs, while defenders had escape-routes rearwards through dense bush.

The participation of the Kingites proved crucial to the continued Maori resistance. The colonial government decided that only an invasion of their home territory could eradicate them and bring lasting peace on the government's terms.

Invasion

The British invasion of Waikato began on 12 July 1863. It was led by General Duncan Cameron, commanding the best part of ten regiments of British imperial regulars. This was something of a coup for the colonial authorities, as it represented nearly half of the 41,000 men that the British Army had available for service abroad. It also came at a time when Britain was seriously contemplating involvement in the civil war then at its height in America. To obtain these forces, Governor Grey had manipulated the imperial government by exaggerating the Maori threat.

General Cameron and many of his officers had served in the Crimea, and were determined to avoid a repetition of that logistical fiasco. Local resources were scarce, and much of the commissariat's supplies came from Britain and Australia. The campaign proved to be one of the best organised and prepared ever undertaken by the British Army.

The countryside south of Auckland was mostly virgin bush. The army had to construct a road to supply the strike force, as living off the land was not an option. Waikato is named after New Zealand's largest river, which flows through its heart to the sea, and at first Cameron preferred this as his supply route. The Kingites, however, employed the hit-and-run tactics that had proved successful in

Right Maori trenches at Gate Pa, depicted after the capture of the fortress. The defenders had dug deep shell-proof bunkers, which enabled them to survive the British artillery bombardment and then to ambush the attacking British infantry inside the complex.



Above A British attack on a Maori *pa*.

Taranaki, and on 7 September they raided the Camerontown supply-base, killing the small garrison and burning 40 tons of supplies.

Henceforward, Cameron was forced to rely on the road, providing protection for it by constructing and manning redoubts every couple of miles. To counter this threat, the Maoris built several defence lines across the British line of advance. On 20 November, they made their major stand at Rangiriri.

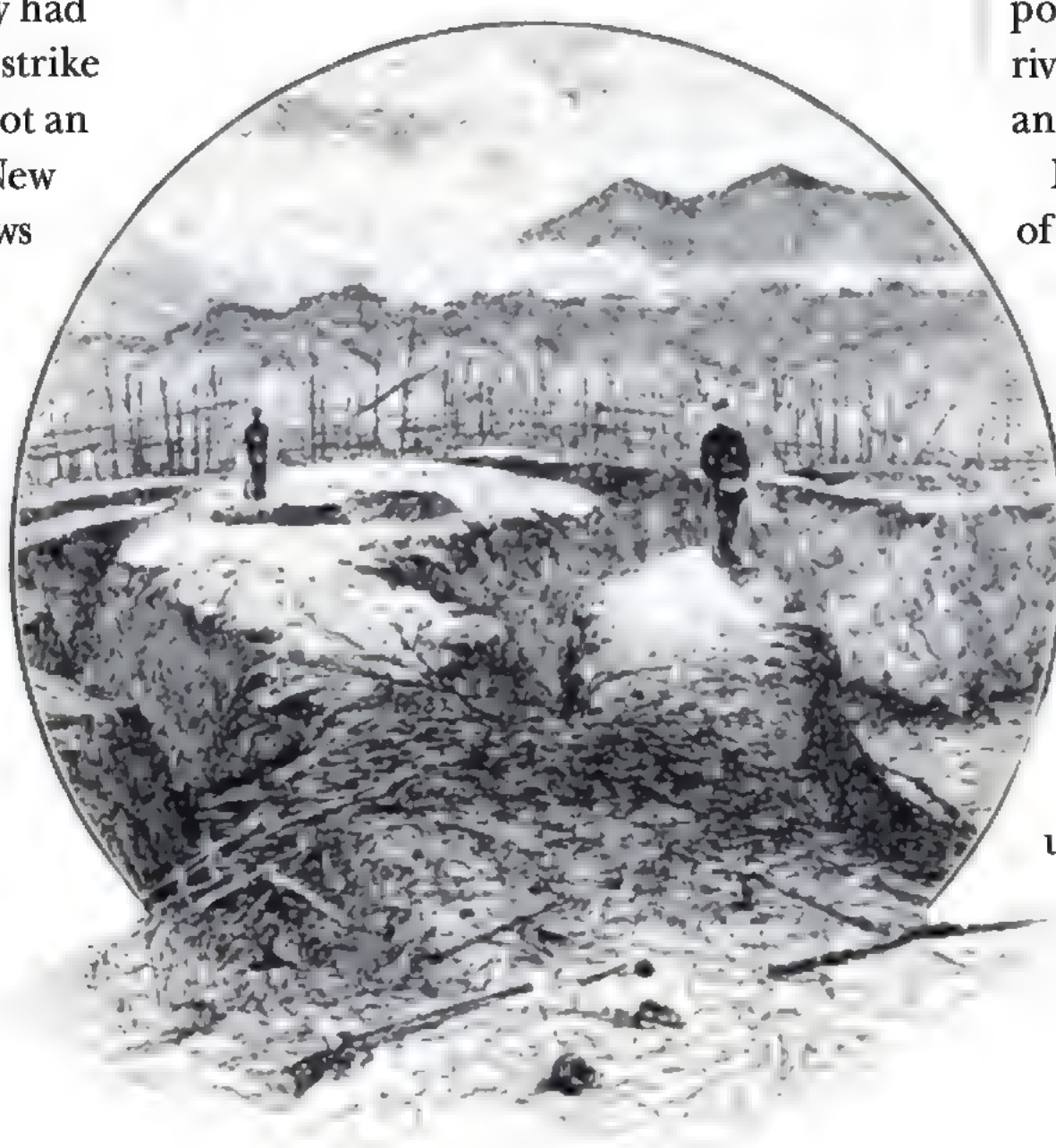
The Battle of Rangiriri

Comprising a formidable earthwork built between a lake and the Waikato River, the Rangiriri position could not be flanked. It was held by about 500 Maoris, all with the latest rifles and plenty of ammunition, although they had no artillery.

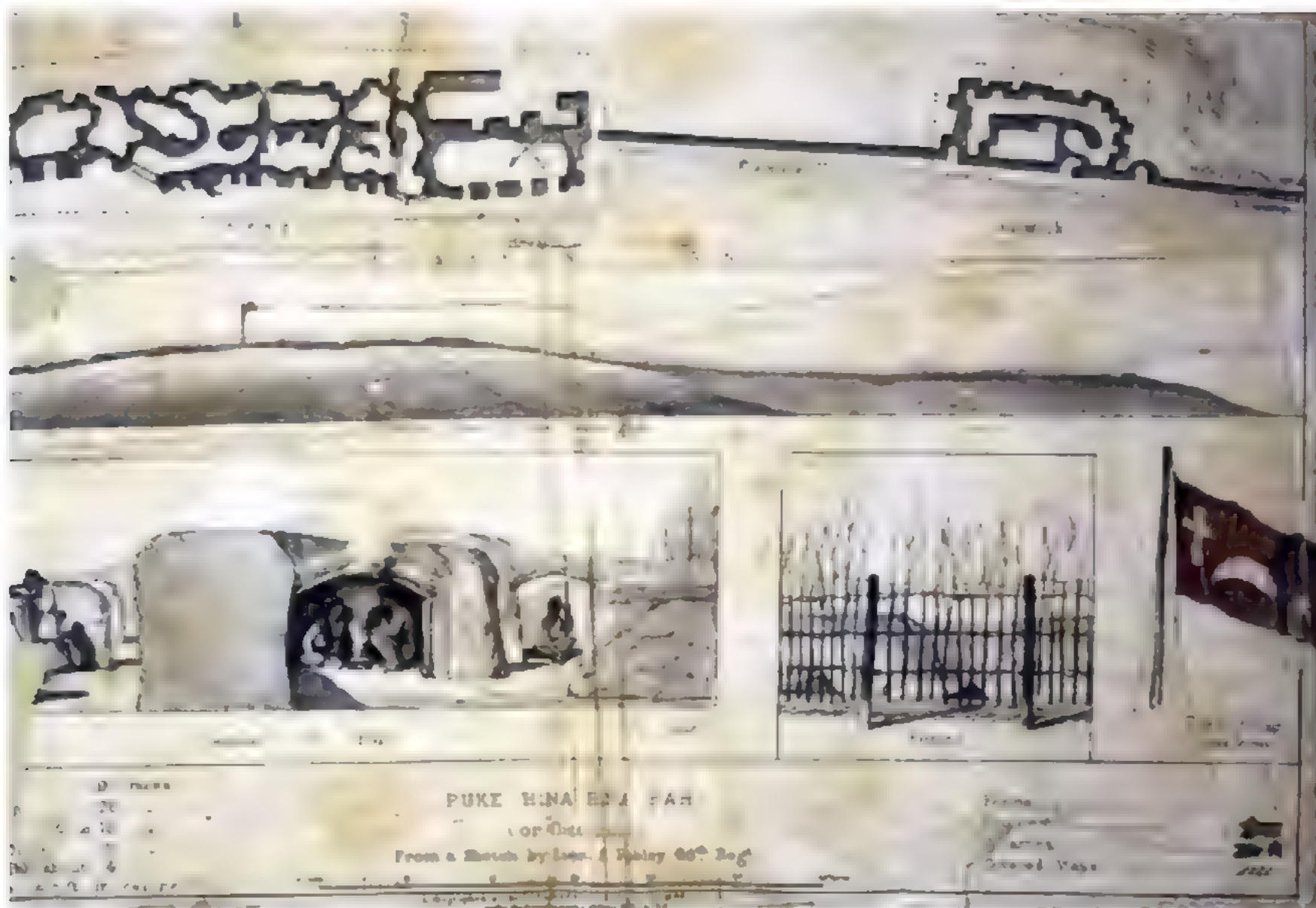
The British had sailed a gunboat onto the river and before the battle, on surveying the defences from the boat, General Cameron surmised that, as the position could be enfiladed from the river, it was susceptible to a frontal attack and made his preparations accordingly.

But he had failed to identify the depth of the trenches and a line of rifle-pits outside the main redoubt. The British attack was brutally repulsed with heavy losses, as the bombardment failed either to breach the earthworks or to cause many casualties among the defenders.

The position was finally carried by subterfuge when the Maoris, while enquiring under a flag of truce about possible terms of surrender, unwittingly let so many British soldiers into the fort that it became impossible for them to open fire on the intermingled forces. General ▶



MAORI WARRIORS



Above Contemporary plan of the Maori defence-works at Gate Pa, drawn by a British officer after its capture.

Cameron quickly seized the opportunity to demand their capitulation.

The invasion then crawled into the heart of Kingite territory. But the Maori tactic of creating defensive works, delaying the British, causing casualties, and then escaping meant that Cameron was unable to inflict a decisive defeat. The Maoris, on the other hand, always outnumbered and outgunned, could neither halt the British advance nor keep a large force permanently in the field. As in Taranaki, the invasion became a stalemate.

Gate Pa

In January 1864, in order to cut off a vital Kingite supply-route, Cameron dispatched a small force to garrison the coastal town of Tauranga. Local Kingites built a *pa* overlooking the British seaside garrison, and when the British resolutely resisted attacking them, they goaded their enemy with daring raids on their position. Sensing an opportunity, Cameron became determined to eradicate this threat.

In April, he sailed for Tauranga with his entire strategic reserve, two regiments including the elite 43rd Rifles, veterans of Quebec, the Peninsula, and India. He also took with him a large number of guns, including 11 brand new Armstrong breech-loaders of various calibres. To this, he could add naval support. It was a formidable force to pitch against an enemy who never mustered more than 250 men.

Gate *Pa* consisted of two redoubts stretching across the neck of a narrow peninsula. The main work was 90 by 30 yards across, with the smaller one next to it about 25 yards square. Determined

to give the Maoris no chance of escape, Cameron sent 170 men of the 65th regiment to form a blocking line behind the *pa*, while he bombarded it with his guns, including a massive 110-pdr (177mm). This was the largest gun ever to be used onshore against the natives, and its naval crew maintained that they were going to 'blow the *pa* to the Devil'. The bombardment lasted nearly eight hours, and if weight of shell per square yard is the measure, it was heavier than the opening barrage on the Somme.

The trap is sprung

By 4pm a breach had been made in the earthworks, and Cameron sent in his assault party, 500 men from the 43rd along with a marine detachment. There were another 300 soldiers in close support.

Encountering no defensive response, the soldiers believed that the Maoris were either obliterated or had somehow escaped. Entering the seemingly deserted fortification, they found a small number

If weight of shell per square yard is the measure, the bombardment was heavier than the opening barrage on the Somme.

of wounded, but otherwise the trenches were empty. The soldiers began to scavenge for loot.

Just as Captain Greaves was reporting to the general that the *pa* was taken, shooting broke out. Suddenly the British were observed streaming back out of the breach. It had been a magnificently planned and executed trap.

The Maoris had become accustomed to the British way of war – an artillery barrage followed by assault. Having no artillery for counter-battery fire, they had conceived the idea of deep defensive works in order to nullify the bombardment. Previously, they had erected a flagpole at the centre of their forts, a fact which had not escaped notice by British gunners, who regularly used them as convenient targets. Being the focal point of the defences, even shots that were off target still landed in the position, causing casualties and destroying earthworks.

At Gate *Pa*, the Maoris cunningly placed their flagpole 100 yards behind the *pa*, making it much taller than usual so that from the British positions it appeared once again to grace the centre. While not all shots sailed harmlessly over the fortification, a significant proportion did. Added to this was the fact that a number of the Armstrongs' shells were defective and failed to explode. In consequence, the barrage did not inflict as much damage as expected.

Maori military engineering

Maori engineers calculated that the deeper their trenches were, the more protection they provided. Comprising substantial underground chambers with angled passages to protect from blast, they were in effect bunkers. The entrances were covered by large timbers and earth. They also dug a number of more visible, shallow trenches that were deliberately left unmanned.

It is interesting to note that at exactly the same time the Confederate forces in the American Civil War were also digging trenches to escape the effects of the increasingly heavy Union bombardments, but these were neither as sophisticated nor as effective as those of Gate Pa. The British would not encounter such defences again until they reinvented them to counter German artillery during late 1914 in the Ypres salient on the Western Front.

The Maori plan had been to create a false sense of security among the British by making Cameron believe that he had



learned the lessons of earlier battles, particularly Rangiriri. The Maoris waited patiently in their bunkers until the British soldiers were right on top of them, their guard down, and then opened a murderous fire.

It had the desired effect, and over 130 British troops died for the loss of about 25 Maoris. As the first wave of assault troops reeled out of the killing-ground, they flooded into the second wave, destroying its cohesion. In the confusion, the Maoris emerged from their defences to take a heavy toll on their bewildered enemy.

Cameron was rightly distraught and unable to organise another attack that day. Knowing that their tactics had been a one-hit wonder, and that their vastly inferior numbers could not withstand another attack, the Maoris withdrew under cover of darkness, leaving the British to occupy an empty *pa*.

A lesson unlearned

Gate *Pa* was significant for several reasons. It was the first time that a considerable artillery barrage had been nullified by superior defences. Unlike at Isandlwana, the British had been confidently attacking the enemy with a vastly superior force of elite troops, rather than having been surprised in an indefensible position. Three days later, Cameron discovered the Kingites in a partly constructed defence-work several miles away at Te Ranga and was able to defeat them decisively in open battle, bringing his campaign in the Waikato to a conclusion.

Unfortunately for the British, this success was used to obscure the lessons that should have been learned at Gate *Pa*, rather in the way that Rorke's Drift would be used to obscure the Zulu victory in South Africa 15 years later. The defeat at Gate *Pa* was blamed on the commanding

Above The British were routed in a sudden attack by the Maori defenders of Gate *Pa*. The Maoris had been sheltering in deep trenches, and had allowed the British to enter the compound before opening fire, taking them by surprise at close range.

general's mistakes, rather than the enemy's superior strategic performance.

On his return to England, Cameron became superintendent at Sandhurst, a post which he held for seven years. But he failed to acknowledge that the Maori bunkers had counteracted the effect of his artillery bombardment. It was a lesson that was kept in store until World War I. ☛

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy McDonald is a military historian, writer, and TV documentary-maker from New Zealand. He specialises in little-known battles that have made important contributions to history.

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THE POPPY



The Poppy

FROM FLANDERS FIELDS TO
HELMAND PROVINCE

Anthropologist **Nick Saunders** explores
the rich symbolism of the Remembrance Day poppy.

The iron scent of blood stains the Remembrance Poppy. In the black-magic fields of Flanders and the Somme, corn-poppy petals are nourished by the memory of 'the missing'. It is as if the souls of those who died there between 1914 and 1918 have been transformed into a million blood-red flowers, whose enduring image reaches out to the farthest limits of our imagination.

From Caesar to Napoleon, this ancient land has been won and lost in countless battles. But today, it is the armies of the dead from a war not quite a century old that march again.

The Remembrance Poppy is a volatile flower – a barometer of conscience and conflict, whose story reaches back into the distant past. How and why did such a humble flower become a universal symbol of remembrance and commemoration?

Death and dreams

The story of the Remembrance Poppy is one of the strangest and most compelling of the 20th century. It is tragic and uplifting, deadly and comforting, intimately personal yet international in spirit.

The poppy is an ancient symbol, yet also a modern icon of war and sacrifice. It is an ambiguous touchstone in a dangerous world. It collides with the biggest events and issues of the last hundred years – the First and Second World Wars, millions of war-dead, pacifism, and remembrance. Ironically, it is also embroiled in the international 'War on Terror' through the billion-dollar trade in narcotics, trafficking the opium poppy and its derivatives.

The poppy's story is as old as civilisation. Following its ancient origins, we glimpse a primordial world of sorcery, where Nature and humanity were joined imperceptibly by spirituality and ritual. On a 3,000-year-old statue from Minoan Crete, a 'Poppy Goddess' statue wears an opium-poppy headdress, and a dreamy expression, which evokes a supernatural encounter. Centuries later, classical Greek myth tells that poppies flowered along the banks of the River Lethe, which flowed to Hades, and from which the dead had to drink so as to forget their former existence in the world of the living.

Death and sleep and dreams are closely entwined with the opium poppy, as the Greek gods Hypnos (Sleep) and Morpheus (Dreams) call on opium to cast their spells. The association of the poppy with the anguish and suffering



Above Morpheus, Greek God of Dreams and the son of Hypnos, God of Sleep, invoked the power of opium to cast his spell over mortals, and is often shown holding or wearing poppies – the tools of his trade.

of war also appeared at this time in the works of Homer. At a banquet in Sparta, Helen eased the Trojan War grief of her guests by spiking their wine with honey and opium. From the beginning, the opium poppy was a civilised plant, whose euphoria masked the pain of everyday living, soothed painful memories of war, and eased the passage from life to death.

Corn poppy and opium poppy

The scarlet corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) and purple-white opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) reveal their intimacy through a long relationship with war, not least because the 'long sleep' of death was so easily associated with opium narcosis, and because of the corn poppy's ubiquity on the freshly churned fields of war.

After the Battle of Waterloo, the mass graves of Napoleon's soldiers were rapidly smothered by scarlet poppies. A local myth soon arose that it was the

blood of the dead which added lustre to the crimson sheen of the battlefield.

For the soldiers of the First World War, the corn poppy, the opium poppy, and conflict were blasted together with industrial force, and their symbolism fused. Personal experiences juxtaposed images of the crimson poppy and scenes of carnage on the battlefields.

Corn poppies were imagined as the spirits of the dead rising from the ►

The Greek gods Hypnos and Morpheus use opium poppies to cast their spells.

THE POPPY

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

John McCrae, May 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



blood-drenched earth – ‘thrusting from the lips of craters, undaunted by the desolation, heedless of human fury and stupidity’ as the fighter-pilot Cecil Lewis observed. Captain Rowland Fielding described soldiers wildly rushing across a no-man’s-land ablaze with scarlet poppies, accompanied by a storm of rifle and machine-gun fire. Experiences such as these played on men’s imaginations, and were the basis for the poppy becoming a metaphor for the dead.

‘In Flanders Fields’

It was the Canadian soldier-surgeon John McCrae who crystallised these feelings in his 1915 poem ‘In Flanders Fields’. Crouching at the entrance to his dugout, just outside Ypres in Belgian Flanders, McCrae gazed on the small battlefield cemetery where he had just buried a close

friend. From his grief he conjured a poem, immortalising the poppy in his opening stanza, ‘In Flanders fields the poppies blow, / Between the crosses, row on row’.

The poem became the touchstone of emotion for the war generation, striking a chord with soldiers and public alike. Reprinted many times, it was used to raise money and morale for the war effort, luring more young men to an untimely death.

The corn poppy became the ‘Flanders Poppy’, an emblem for the souls of the dead, and a crimson palliative for those who had lost loved ones. Its ambiguous relationship with the opium poppy manifested itself in morphine, a powerful painkiller which made the physical agonies of war more bearable, and which was a derivative of opium.

‘In Flanders Fields’ established the corn poppy as the symbolic flower of the Great War, but did not guarantee its post-war emergence as an international symbol of commemoration for the English-speaking world. This final transformation to the Remembrance Poppy took place in New York in the days leading up to the Armistice of 11 November 1918. It was here that an unassuming middle-aged schoolteacher named Moina Michael had nothing less than a messianic spiritual conversion.

Moina Michael’s mission

Moina chanced on McCrae’s poem in a magazine, and imagined the voices of the dead clamouring for her to convert the scarlet flower into a sacred emblem of their sacrifice. She never married, and regarded the poppy as her ‘spirit child’, pledging her soul, she said, to ‘that crimson cup flower of Flanders, the red Poppy which caught

the sacrificial blood of ten million men dying for the Peace of the World’.

Her eloquent appeals and passionate energy overcame numerous hurdles during the following years, until, in 1921, the poppy was adopted as the official remembrance flower of the United States. The ‘Buddy Poppy’, as it was soon re-christened, remains the national flower of war commemoration to this day, though most Americans would not recognise it.

But this was a story of two women, for Moina’s obsession was matched by Anna Guérin, an elegant French widow who championed the manufacturing of silken red poppies in the devastated areas of France, and sold them across the world to raise money for veterans and orphans of the Great War.

Rivalry between the two women was unspoken but keen. Anna’s early financial advantage was undermined when American veterans decided that their own disabled comrades should make poppies in the USA. Fashioned by the crippled hands of men with missing limbs, the Buddy Poppy tugged at the nation’s heart every Veterans Day.

The British Legion

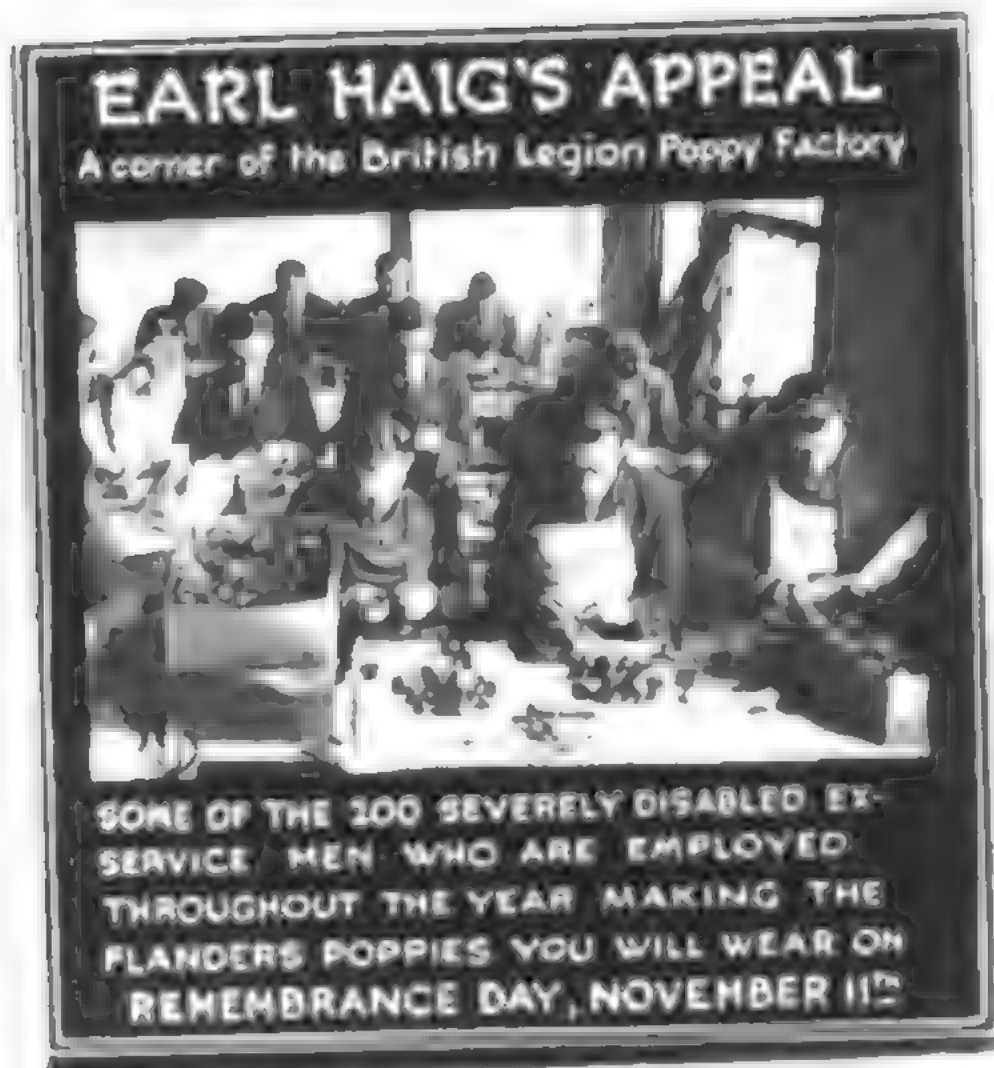
Nothing daunted, Anna Guérin sealed the poppy’s international success by travelling to Canada, and her representatives to Australia and New Zealand, all of which adopted the commemorative flower. She visited London, too, where she convinced the British Legion to embrace the poppy. This victory was short-lived, however, as the Legion soon began making its own artificial flowers for their Poppy Day Appeal, where the red-cloth poppy on its wire attachment recalled for many a generation of youth sacrificed on the barbed wire of the Western Front.

In Britain, from 1921, buying a Remembrance Poppy directly supported the war-wounded who were employed in the British Legion’s newly established Poppy Factory. The beginnings were modest, with just five disabled servicemen in a small room above a shop off the Old Kent Road in south-east London. As poppy-wearing gathered momentum, the operation moved to Richmond in Surrey, and then, in 1933, to a purpose-built factory nearby, where it remains to this day.

The symbolism of this arrangement is as poignant and appropriate today as it was at the time. Men shattered by war created poppies to commemorate their fallen comrades, and to raise money to support the bereaved and themselves.

Photo: © J. Brazier

Below An early Remembrance Day poster, showing disabled men assembling poppies in London.





The inspirational spirit of giving associated with the poppy made a deep impression, and endured for decades. Some 40 years later, in 1967, the First World War veteran Alexander Anthony, who had fought on the Somme and at Ypres, clung resolutely to the poppy.

I'm a believer, you see. And to me that poppy means everything... I have been connected with these poppies for the last 50 years... When you know where your donation goes and the amount of money spent on destitute ex-servicemen who have given their all for their country, and you see these badly disabled servicemen making the poppies, then the light in their eyes when you bring them part of this donation is all the justification needed.

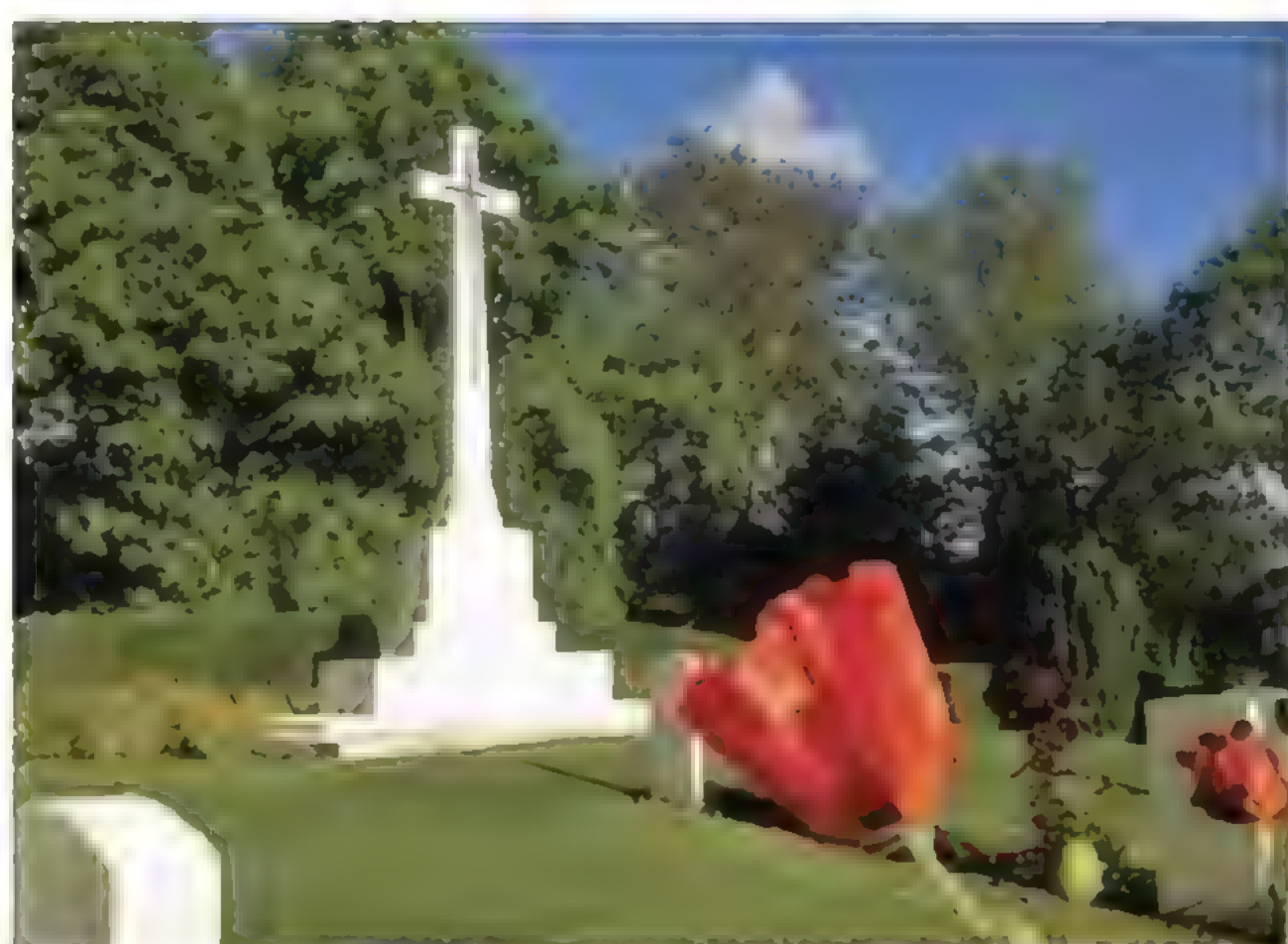
Championed by Moina Michael – the ‘Poppy Princess’ – and Anna Guérin – the ‘Poppy Lady’ – the Remembrance Poppy spread across the world, taking root in the hearts and consciences of men, women, and children in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and beyond.

Its memorial symbolism was sealed in 1927, when, fresh from his epoch-making transatlantic flight in the *Spirit of St Louis*, the aviator Charles Lindbergh flew over the American war cemetery at Wareghem in Belgium and threw poppies over the assembled crosses of America's war dead.

After the Battle of Waterloo, the mass graves of Napoleon's soldiers were rapidly smothered by scarlet poppies.

Above Poppy crosses and a wreath – one of the many such displays which appear almost daily at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing at Ypres, Belgium.

Below A poppy in evening sunlight at the ‘Ypres Reservoir’ Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery at Ypres, Belgium.



Pilgrims

During the interwar years of 1919-1939, crimson-cloth poppies for the living and counterpart wreaths on headstones and memorials became a new tradition. They bloomed for the dead and missing, as thousands of pilgrims journeyed to the scenes of sacrifice, and countless more paid their annual respects from London to Sydney, New York to Vancouver.

As another war loomed, coachloads of desolate people tramped the battlefields of the old Western Front. They sought a rendezvous of the spirit which they had been denied in life when fathers, brothers, husbands, and lovers did not return.

These pilgrims fell silent, only to ponder or weep, to buy souvenirs, to fix their memories to a place, and a sky, and imagine their loved ones who had once passed this way. They set down their poppies, and returned

home with strangely shaped objects reverently placed on mantelpieces and in hallways: embroidered silk handkerchiefs, decorated brass shell-cases, carved wooden boxes, and even fragments of earth.

By far the most popular of these battlefield mementos were the empty shell-cases decorated with art nouveau floral designs – including the poppy. They served as ‘flower vases’, harking back to the pre-war fashion for pastoral ▶

THE POPPY



Above One of the first British Legion Remembrance Day poppies.

Made before the Legion began manufacturing its own poppies, it was bought in from Anna Guérin's poppy factory in France.

Middle To forestall poppy-selling for private profit, the British Legion introduced official poppy-seller badges.

Right A writing-equipment box – one of many poppy-themed items produced during the 1920s.

imagery, and an ageless fascination with flowers shared by the soldiers themselves.

The power of these ornaments to disturb later generations was part of the hidden world of the post-war years. It is only occasionally glimpsed, as in the item bought by Mabel Jeffries as a souvenir of her wartime service as a nurse in France. Sixty years later, long after Mabel had died, her niece revealed its secret.

Yes, that thing by the fireplace with the flowers on it is really a shell-case... She brought that back from France for her parents; I thought it was an awfully morbid thing... It got to Granny's house and then it came here... I often look at it and wonder how many men its shell killed.

It was in this volatile and unpredictable landscape of memory that the Remembrance Poppy flourished, renewing itself each year, and bringing hope and financial help to families decimated by the war. Wearing the poppy was an act of faith and solidarity with the dead and the living, and seemed to promise that such terrible sufferings would never be repeated – just as Moina Michael had intended. Battlefield pilgrimages were splashed with flowers, and the sight of crimson fields brought many to tears. Commemorating the war was becoming an industry, and the Remembrance Poppy its peerless emblem.

Poppy craze and drowsy vapours

Bizarre sights were seen in Britain. A poppy-decked elephant paraded the streets of Leeds in 1924, and in the same year a poppy-covered goat hauled a miniature replica of

Wimbledon's war memorial around south London streets.

The poppy fields of the Somme and Belgian Flanders were shrunk to more manageable size in the grounds adjacent to London's Westminster Abbey. A single wooden cross brought from the battlefield grave of an unknown British soldier stood alone until 1928, when passers-by began planting their own poppies alongside. The Field of Remembrance was born, and still flourishes today in the days leading up to 11 November.

Public enthusiasm for the Remembrance Poppy gripped the English-speaking world. Poppy-selling was mainly women's work, and would remain so until the Second World War. In 1930s Britain, poppies were sold by the 100,000 women of the British Legion's Women's Section, helped by 250,000 female volunteers.

In the United States, volunteers for the soldiers' association known as the 'Veterans of Foreign Wars' were often pretty young women, who stood in front of giant 'stars and stripes' flags surrounded by poppy wreaths and patriotic posters, handing out poppies to the public for a donation.

As the Second World War approached, Hollywood joined in, and female movie stars such as Ginger Rogers, Jane Wyman, and Joan Leslie were chosen as Buddy Poppy Girls. Although too young to be a Poppy Girl, Judy Garland did her bit: the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz* sees her falling asleep in a field of magical poppies, overcome by their drowsy vapours.

White poppies

The Remembrance Poppy was not accepted by everyone. In 1933 the Women's Co-operative Guild invented the

White Poppy as an emblem of peace, to commemorate all war victims and express the hope for an end to all conflict. When the British Legion refused to manufacture what it regarded as a morally dubious rival, the newly formed Peace Pledge Union began making them (and still does today).

Many First World War veterans were enraged by the White Poppy, regarding it as undermining their wartime sacrifices, and as too close to the white feather of cowardice and the white flag of surrender. Women lost their jobs for wearing it, and on Armistice Days white-poppy wreaths were removed by red-poppy wearers and trampled underfoot. Some saw both sides of the argument, and wore red and white poppies together.

The White Poppy remains contentious. When, in November 2005, white poppies were sold in a church in Ipswich, local war veterans branded it disgraceful. Dunkirk survivor Bernard Sharp said, 'The red poppy is a symbol of help and to remember

A corn poppy in appearance, but an opium poppy in substance, the Remembrance Poppy is now a global symbol of war's human tragedy.

those who've died. I lost lots of friends in the war... I don't recognise the white poppy'.

Not everyone thought this way. In 2006 Captain Nichola Goddard became Canada's only woman soldier to die in Afghanistan. Her father, whose relatives had fought on the Somme, said he would be happy for her to be remembered with the White Poppy, adding 'peacekeepers or peacemakers, they're all worthy of our respect'.

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson

9/11 is a date scorched into the psyche of the West. The darker symbolism of the poppy stormed back into public consciousness in an apocalyptic vision of Islamic terrorism when the World Trade Centre came crashing down just a few blocks from where Moina Michael experienced her decidedly Christian revelation 80 years before.

The US response – the 'War on Terror' – rejuvenated the visceral connections between poppies, war, and violent death. As coalition troops flooded into Afghanistan, the nightmare of 1914-1918 returned, and soon American, British, and Canadian soldiers were dying again amid fields of poppies.

The invasion unwittingly breathed new life into opium, and eradicating its poppy quickly became a key objective in winning the conflict. British soldiers had last smelled opium winds in the summer of 1880, when a British army was all but annihilated by Afghan tribesmen at the Battle of Maiwand on the banks of the Helmand River.

In a twist of literary fate, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had made Dr Watson – Sherlock Holmes' faithful companion – a survivor of Maiwand, and outspokenly critical of Holmes' habitual use of the opium-derivative morphine.

Now, the British were back. The corn poppy remains a symbol of commemoration and war, but its opium-bearing cousin has become a reason for conflict. The two poppy varieties are locked together through conflict as closely today as they were in Homer's account of the Trojan War.

The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan rejuvenated the Remembrance Poppy's image and significance in Britain. Passengers at London's Heathrow airport were astonished in 2008 when confronted by a huge Poppy Man, 5m tall and swathed in 8,000 scarlet poppies. Appearing like a crimson figure from English folklore, Poppy Man was in fact a gargantuan version of a life-size figure invented for the Royal British Legion in 2007.

Poppy Man

Poppy Man was a public relations coup for the Legion. Wars change, and public opinion shifts, and the new 'poppy figure' was designed to connect with young people in a more original and meaningful way than previous campaigns that had relied on the endorsements of celebrities.

Poppy Man is hollow inside, yet his void is filled with the identity of loved ones by all who have been bereaved by war. More than this, he captures the transience of life, linking the war-maimed and disabled who make the Remembrance Poppy to thousands of 'poppy-sellers' who throng the streets in the weeks before 11 November. He is unbearably poignant – a spiritual mannequin, covered in red.

The Legion launched its 2008 Poppy Day Appeal by taking him to southern Iraq, where he posed alongside British soldiers, calm and surreal amid the chaos of war. He stood alongside troops in Basra for a service of dedication at a memorial wall commemorating fallen British soldiers in Iraq, and toured their barracks.

Poppy Man taps into the core of the Remembrance Poppy – honouring the past, but resolutely contemporary, forever relevant to the young men who die and are wounded so far from home, and who leave wives, sweethearts, and children behind.

The poppy is a powerful and ancient symbol, embodying ideas of war, death, eternal rest, and, ironically, of remembrance and forgetfulness. Its ability to change

its meanings, and become relevant to new realities, shows how deeply rooted it is in human consciousness. Our imaginations play with the poppy's emblematic qualities, moving back and forth between the two varieties, and forging the composite that is the Remembrance Poppy.

A corn poppy in appearance, but an opium poppy in substance, the Remembrance Poppy is now a global symbol of war's human tragedy.

Every year, around 80 million people across the world buy a Remembrance Poppy, participating in its message of remembering and honouring the war dead. Unknowingly, they acknowledge a deep-rooted and formative connection with the distant past, when the opium poppy was a sacred flower that floated the soul to an afterlife of never-ending sleep.

Separate, but forever intertwined, the corn and opium poppies have generated more wealth, misery, hope, and death than any flower in human history, and together have created the Remembrance Poppy, surely one of the most ambiguous and enduring symbols of our humanity. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Nicholas J Saunders is a leading modern conflict archaeologist and material-culture anthropologist at the University of Bristol. His new book, *The Poppy: a cultural history from Ancient Egypt to Flanders Fields to Afghanistan*, is published by Oneworld this autumn.

Below Commemorative 'poppy coins', issued by the Royal Canadian Mint. American defence contractors believed they were secret radio transmitters, used by the Canadians to spy on their American allies.



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The War Research Society, 27 Courtway Avenue, Maypole, Birmingham B14 4PP
Tel.No. 0121 430 5348. Email:- battletour@aol.com

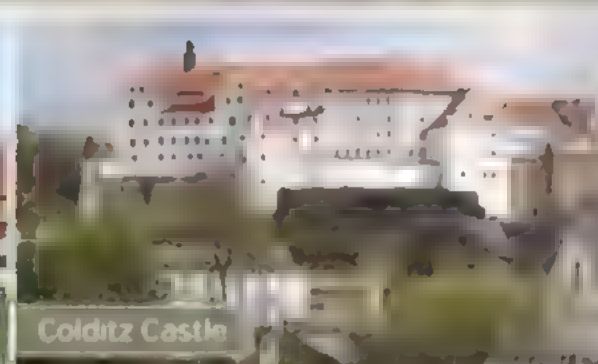


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NOVEMBER 2013

OnManoeuvres

LISTINGS MUSEUM WAR ZONE



DATES TO REMEMBER

THIS NOVEMBER

November The performers at Birmingham Military Tattoo always bring the house down, and this year's event will be no different. There are plenty of informative lectures and hands-on family events taking place too, as we approach Remembrance Sunday. On the Sunday itself, IWM Duxford will host a Remembrance Day service and open its gates to all, free of charge.

Keith Robinson has been at the Fort de la Pompelle this month, where he is impressed by the outdoor artillery pieces and the range of uniforms and headgear on display.

What went on at Moor Park during the Second World War? Alan Jamieson delves into the 18th-century country mansion's secret involvement in Operation Market Garden.

Finally, *MHM* encourages you to visit the Basque Country, specifically the region in which Napoleon lost his grip on the Peninsula at the Battle of Vitoria in 1813.



Listings

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Museum

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War Zone

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DATES TO REMEMBER

WORKSHOP



Hands on HISTORY

The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum is kicking off its First World War commemorations as the centenary looms. The museum now has an Education Officer, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, part of whose work is to provide several workshops over the next two years. These are free of charge.

This is a great opportunity for local families to get hands-on with history. Each child will be assigned a real Gloucestershire soldier from the First World War to investigate.

The workshops are suitable for children aged 8 to 12 and their families.

Boys to Soldiers – First World War Workshop

9 November 2013

Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum
Custom House
Gloucester Docks
Gloucester, GL1 2HE

01452 522682

www.glostest.org.uk

**FREE
ENTRY**

EVENTS



Dancing and dining

Celebrating the 70th anniversary of the arrival of US troops in west Dorset for D-Day, a dance will be held at St Mary's Church House, where James Cagney once entertained the troops with his Yankee Doodle Dandy show. There will be a raffle and pay bar, while pre-booked, pre-paid meals (£4 a head) will be available from the Woodman Inn. The proceeds from ticket sales go to Help for Heroes.

Dancing to the Rex Trevett Big Band

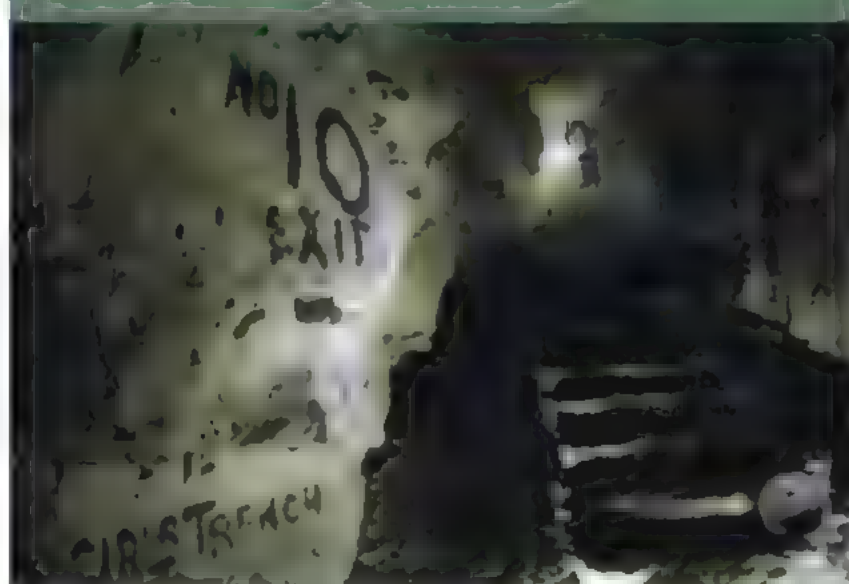
16 November 2013

St Mary's Church House
South Street
Dorset
DT6 3NW

[www.facebook.com/
BridportWw2SwingDance](http://www.facebook.com/BridportWw2SwingDance)

**£7
ENTRY**

LECTURE SERIES



Attack from below
Dr. David Johnson, author of 'The Battle of Britain' and 'The Battle of Britain' will be giving a lecture on the attack from below. The lecture will be held at the Drayton Manor Theme Park. The lecture will be held at the Drayton Manor Theme Park. The lecture will be held at the Drayton Manor Theme Park.

Drayton Manor Theme Park
Tamworth B78 3TW

www.draytonmanor.co.uk

**£25
ENTRY**

FAMILY DAY OUT

Forces-friendly theme park

Drayton Manor Theme Park is proud to offer all serving military personnel exclusive discounts throughout the season. The popular attraction near Tamworth, Staffordshire, is expanding its previous 'Forces Weekend' offer, with discounted entry for members of the Armed Forces and their families on any day throughout the 2013 season.

The offer applies to tickets booked in advance over the phone, granting anyone aged 4 and over entry for just £18, and 2- to 3-year-olds entry for £5, providing a fun family day-out for a fraction of the usual cost. Under-2s remain free.

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Drayton Manor Supports Our Armed Forces

All season

Drayton Manor Theme Park
Tamworth B78 3TW

0844 472 1960

www.draytonmanor.co.uk

**£18
ENTRY**



FAMILY EVENT

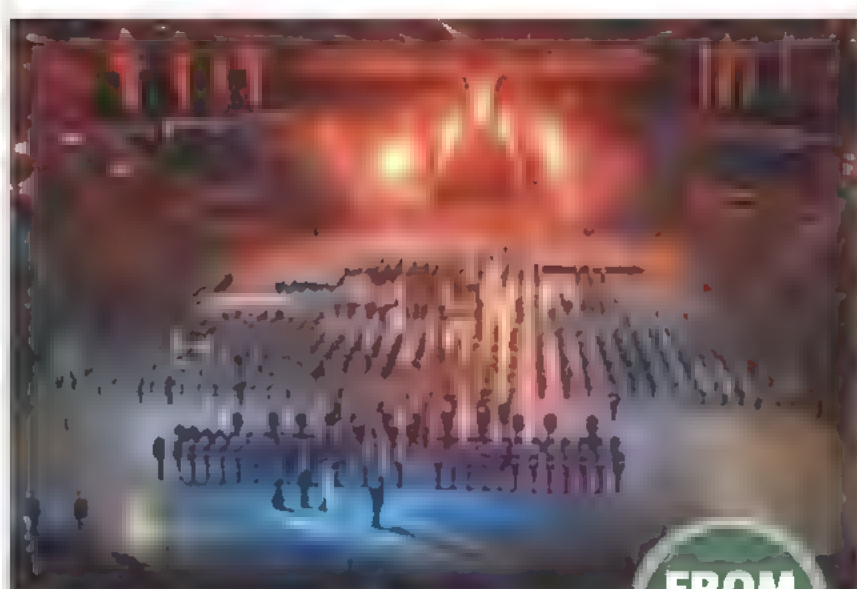
Silver tattoo

The Birmingham International is Britain's biggest indoor military tattoo, involving more than 1,200 performers, and this year it celebrates its silver anniversary, which means it should be even more spectacular than usual.

Expect marching bands, gymnasts, dog-display teams, field guns, and many other attractions in the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham.

The Birmingham International Tattoo
30 November-1 December 2013

The National Indoor Arena
King Edward's Road
Birmingham B1 2PZ



☎ 0844 338 8000
🌐 www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk

**FROM
£14.50**

CURATOR TALK



IWM art highlights

Join art curator Claire Brenard for a tour of 'Architecture of War', a new exhibition of highlights, ranging from the First World War to the present day, from IWM's exceptional art collection. The selection explores the impact of warfare on the spaces people inhabit and build. The talk will address this new approach to showcasing the permanent collection, and examine how artworks were chosen to relate to the exhibition's key themes of construction, destruction, cities, and interiors. The talk will start at the entrance to the gallery and there is no need to book.

Curator Talk: Architecture of War
2 November 2013

IWM London
Lambeth Road
London SE1 6HZ

☎ 020 7416 5000
🌐 www.iwm.org.uk

**FREE
ENTRY**

LECTURE



Danger at Helles

Military historian Peter Hart talks about the evacuation of Helles on the night of 8 January 1916. The famous evacuation of Anzac Cove and Suvla Bay three weeks before tends to attract the lion's share of historians' attention. But, argues Hart, Helles was far more dangerous.

The Evacuation at Gallipoli
12 November 2013

The Prince Michael Hall
Dean Close School
Hatherley Road
Cheltenham GL51 6HE

☎ 0161 443 1918
🌐 www.westernfrontassociation.com

**£5
ENTRY**

EVENT



A TIME TO REMEMBER

Remembrance Sunday has special significance in the IWM Duxford calendar. On this day, the museum offers free admission to all visitors.

In addition to the traditional two-minute silence and Service of Remembrance, there will be hands-on activities across the museum, with all ages able to learn more about commemorating Remembrance. There may also be the opportunity to meet veterans and serving members of the Armed Forces.

Remembrance Sunday

11 November 2013

☎ 0237 877 600

🌐 www.iwm.org.uk

**FREE
ENTRY**

FAMILY EVENT

Brooklands' military motors

Over 80 vehicles, spanning the decades and representing the field of conflict from around the world, are expected for the Brooklands Museum annual Military Vehicle Day. As well as the spectacular displays in the Paddock and around the site, there will be the chance to see some of these machines put through their paces as they tackle the off-road circuit at Mercedes-Benz World at 12.30pm. Many of the vehicles will also take on Test Hill later in the afternoon (weather permitting).

Brooklands Museum Military Vehicle Day
17 November 2013

Brooklands Museum
Weybridge KT13 0QN



☎ 0193 857381
🌐 www.brooklandsmuseum.com

**£10
ENTRY**

MUSEUM



Fort de la Pompelle Museum

Continuing his exploration of French military museums, this month **Keith Robinson** heads north to Reims.



Set high above the road from Reims to Châlons-en-Champagne, the Fort de la Pompelle forms part of the ring of fortifications built to defend Reims after France's disastrous defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

The Fort de la Pompelle, alternatively known as Fort Herbillon, was part of a system of forts known as the Séré de Rivières, named after the general who initiated the building of this belt of forts, designed to defend Reims. The defensive line comprised seven major forts and seven smaller, supporting forts, of which de la Pompelle was one.

Built between 1880 and 1883, the fort has a surface area of 2.31 hectares (5.7 acres), its dry moat was covered by two-level *caponiers* designed to provide flanking fire on any enemy trying to cross the moated areas. The Fort de la Pompelle was provided with six 155mm de Bange guns and four 138mm guns, as well as lesser artillery pieces and machine-guns, all serviced by an artillery company of over 270 men.

It was a working fort for 30-35 years, before technological advances appeared to make it redundant. It was demilitarised in 1913 – only to be hastily reoccupied a year later.

First World War

The German offensive of 1914 captured many of the forts of the Séré de Rivières, which were then used by them as bases. The Fort de la Pompelle was surrendered to the Germans without a fight on 4 September 1914. However, this was a short-lived occupation as, following the First Battle of the Marne (5-12 Sept 1914), the fort was retaken by the French 138th Infantry after a fierce struggle.

Thereafter, the Fort de la Pompelle remained a key point in the defence of Reims, and suffered heavily from numerous German attacks. Infantry assaults, heavy bombardments, gas attacks, mines, and tanks all failed to break the fort's stalwart resistance.

This defensive effort was shared among half of the French forces, with 180 regiments having, at some time,

provided the garrison. These forces included two special Russian brigades, sent by Tsar Nicholas II in 1916, which in January 1917 successfully defended against a German gas attack. A monument that commemorates the Russian involvement in defending the fort was set up in the grounds in September 2012.

By the end of the Great War the fort had been severely battered and the land around it was pockmarked with shell-holes. It was largely abandoned after the war until 1955, when it came into the hands of the City of Reims. Its remaining usable parts were converted into a museum, which was inaugurated in November 1972.

However, with the centenary of the Great War on the horizon, the City of Reims is investing large sums of money in repairing and updating the museum, the fort, and the visitor facilities here. There should be some 40% more of the site to visit, and an equally impressive increase in the number of high-quality artefacts on display.



PICTURED ON BOTH PAGES:

1. New gallery spaces, created from the former soldiers' living quarters
2. The German 77mm FK 96n/A field-gun
3. Display of caps from the German Imperial Army
4. Helmet from the Cigognes Squadron
5. Aerial photograph of the Fort de la Pompelle, 15 February 1918
6. Headgear of German Hussars
7. Gallery display of WWI uniforms
8. French Canon de 155mm GPF, 1917



Museum grounds

In the open ground before the drawbridge which leads to the fort's main entrance stand a couple of interesting artillery pieces. The first is the Canon de 155mm GPF (or Grande Puissance Filloux) of 1917, designed by Colonel Filloux to answer France's desperate need for modern heavy artillery; it was France's standard heavy field-gun until WWII. The Canon de 155mm took a 43.1kg (95lb) shell, which could be fired at a rate of two rounds per minute, and had a maximum range of 19,500m.

The second artillery piece is an Italian version of the French 1913 model Schneider Canon de 105mm L field gun. The Ansaldo 105/28 was manufactured in 1918 by Ansaldo of Genoa. It had a different shield from the French Schneider, and would have required a unit of six men under the command of an NCO. This mark of field-gun remained in active service with the Italian Army until 1945.

Crossing the drawbridge and entering the museum proper, you enter the area of the troops' living quarters. Half of these have now been turned into modern exhibition spaces, and good galleries they make too. They hold a good mix of material, mostly relating to the Great War.

A prototype of the ubiquitous French 75mm field-gun of 1877, often regarded as the first modern piece of artillery due to its hydro-pneumatic recoil mechanism, is on display. This rubs shoulders with a French Field

Kitchen and a 1914 model Hotchkiss machine-gun, mounted on a 1916 tripod.

An example of the German 77mm FK 96n/A field-gun can also be seen. This was a very mobile piece of artillery, but once the War had settled into the trenches its lack of range – around 5,500m – became a problem. It was duly superseded by the longer-barrelled 77mm FK 16.

Great War uniforms

There are displays of WWI uniforms, including a Russian in 'khaki', and a special section on air warfare. One interesting display houses material relating to the French fighter-ace Joseph Guiguet, credited with five kills, from his time with Escadrille No.3 Les Cigognes ('The Storks'), one of France's most celebrated squadrons.

Undoubtedly, however, the highlight of the collection is the unique collection of 560 pieces of military headgear from the German Imperial Army – the former Charles Friese collection.

The display of the helmets and caps is perhaps a little old-fashioned, and this

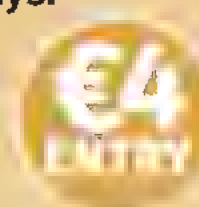
will probably be updated, but one cannot help but be impressed by the serried ranks of headwear on show. The sheer variety of German headgear is impressive, not surprising given the fact that the individual states kept their own distinctive uniforms despite unification.

This fort is well worth a visit, both for the collections and as a grand piece of military architecture.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Fort de la Pompelle is 5km (just over 3 miles) from Reims on the RN44, towards Châlons-en-Champagne.

Open 1 November-31 March 10am-5pm daily. 1 April-31 October 11am-7pm weekends & 11am-6pm weekdays. Closed on Tuesdays.



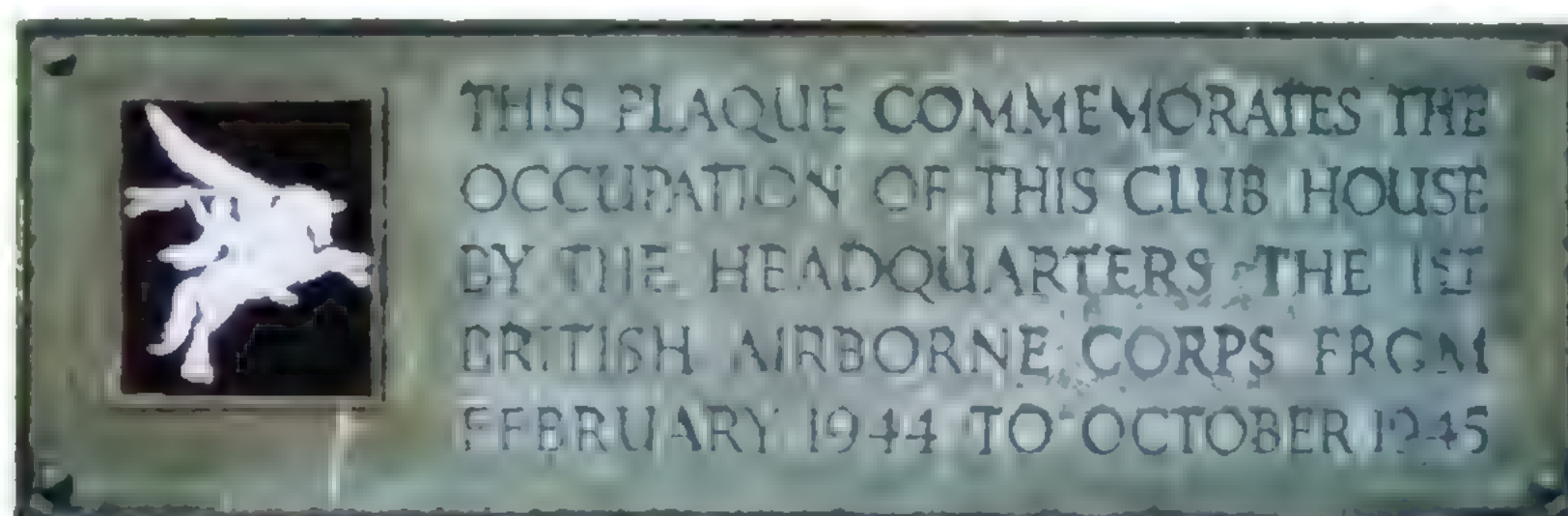
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Plotting at Moor Park

Alan Jamieson explains the significance of this 18th-century mansion in the planning of Operation Market Garden in 1944.



Moor Park is an exclusive golf club, 18 miles north-west of London, a mile from the town of Rickmansworth.

The clubhouse is a beautiful 18th-century Palladian mansion with a Baroque interior. It was previously owned and occupied by Lord Anson (who sailed around the world in HMS *Centurion* in 1741-1744); by the fabulously rich Lord Grosvenor, who owned most of Mayfair; and, in the 1920s, by Lord Leverhulme of Sunlight Soap fame. However, in the space of four weeks in September 1944, Moor Park had its moment of national fame in military history.

During the early years of the Second World War, Moor Park – the mansion and the surrounding park – were taken over by the Army, first as an officers' school, then as an officers' prisoner-of-war camp, then as a centre of operations for an airborne-planning team in 1944. At a leisurely pace, and with occasional breaks for a game of golf, officers planned various airborne assaults into northern France, post-D-Day. All of them were aborted.

This peaceful life was rudely interrupted on 10 September 1944, when General Montgomery called his commanders together for a conference at his headquarters in Brussels. He outlined a daring plan, an Anglo-American collaborative effort named Operation Market Garden. The plan would involve a ground and airborne assault into Holland to seize Eindhoven, Nijmegen, and Arnhem, capturing eight bridges across the Mass, Waal, and Rhine rivers, outflanking the 400-mile Siegfried Line and the Ruhr, thus enabling a swift advance across northern Germany to seize Berlin before the Russians arrived. Daring and ambitious in conception, but, as it happened, disastrous in its execution.

The generals arrive

Moor Park mansion was transformed. The planners were given only seven days to adapt and revise the details of Comet, an earlier planned – and cancelled – airborne assault. New commanders arrived. Among them were two generals who were to be famous in the Arnhem story. Lieutenant-General F A M Browning, the elegant and handsome

Above Moor Park mansion, where British planners conceived history's best-known the airborne assault.

Inset The plaque to the 1st Airborne Corps.

founder of the Airborne Corps, had two nicknames: other ranks called him 'Mr Daphne', because he was the husband of the novelist Daphne du Maurier, and Paratroop officers called him 'Boy' due to his youthful appearance.

His companion was Major-General R E 'Roy' Urquhart, ex-Highland Light Infantry, now promoted to be commanding officer of the 1st Airborne Division. Together they climbed the stairs in Moor Park to a room on the first floor, where they inspected maps and aerial photographs, pored over a sand-table of the Arnhem terrain, and finalised the plan.

It had been decided by Eisenhower and Montgomery that the US 101st Airborne Division would land near Eindhoven, the US 82nd Airborne would seize the bridge at Nijmegen, and the British 1st Airborne would go for the bridge at Arnhem.

The Moor Park planners were responsible for the Arnhem landings. For seven days, General Browning lived



Left General Urquhart outside his headquarters at Arnhem.

Above The Arnhem Room.

Right The Bridge at Arnhem, showing the wreckage of German armoured vehicles.



in a small bedroom in the mansion, while Roy Urquhart preferred a caravan on the golf course. In his memoirs, Urquhart later wrote, 'While troops were being briefed at the airfields and others had begun to load the gliders, I took out my golf clubs and played a few holes of golf at Moor Park.' An officer approached him to tell him some bad news – there would be fewer gliders than planned, and the landings would have to take place over three days. Urquhart took the news calmly: 'I holed out.' British *sang-froid* at its coolest.

The conference in the Arnhem Room

On Tuesday 12 September at 5pm, the four airborne brigadiers, their brigade majors, and supporting officers from the Royal Artillery, REME, RAMC, Signals, and other units assembled in the upstairs room, now called the 'Arnhem Room'. The sand-table had had to be hurriedly removed. Below the Arnhem Room is the Thornhill Room, with a famous and unique ceiling created in 1707 by Antonio Verrio. The weight of the sand-table had caused the floor to sag. Consternation! The Thornhill Room ceiling shows the god Apollo driving his chariot across the sky towards the sun – the painted ceiling is a national treasure. Despite rumours to the contrary, some military personnel are art-lovers, or at least art-respecters, and the sand-table had been taken away. Apollo survived, the sag disappeared, and today the classical paintings on the walls and ceiling are gazed at and admired by visitors to the mansion.

At the meeting on 12 September, Urquhart surprised his audience of over 100 officers by announcing that a new and ambitious operation was

imminent – the whole airborne division would fly by glider and drop by parachute at Arnhem. The mood suddenly changed. Looking out over a tense audience, and with Browning at his side, Urquhart snapped out his orders. The infantry commanders, part of the Airlanding Brigade, included some of Britain's famous regiments – the Border Regiment, KOSB, Dorsets, and South Staffords.

Urquhart spent time with them, pointing out the glider landing zones and the paratroop dropping zones, which were up to eight miles from their Arnhem bridge objective: one of the tactical weaknesses that was to contribute to the failure of the campaign.

When he went on to explain that the landings would be over three days, Major General Sosabowski of the 1st Polish Independent Brigade pointed out the dangers of a three-day drop when surprise and speed – the twin essential elements of airborne tactics – would be jeopardised. Brigadier Hackett, 4th Para Brigade commander, agreed with him. In his later account of the battle, Hackett wrote, 'In retrospect it seems crazy for my brigade to drop on the second day with all surprise gone, but we realised that we had to get into the battle after all those cancellations.'

The exodus

At the end of the conference, the visiting officers all left Moor Park to join their units. Browning immediately flew to northern France. Urquhart spent the next four days touring the brigades which were assembling at eight airfields in Oxfordshire, Lincolnshire, and Kent, returning to his caravan in the evenings. On 17 September the air armada took off, with Urquhart in a glider. The battle at Arnhem over the following nine days has been told in over a hundred books and

the film *A Bridge Too Far* – itself a matter of contention (Daphne du Maurier objected strongly to Dirk Bogarde being cast as her husband, General Browning). Moor Park had played a small but significant part in the planning, but has few mentions in the Arnhem archive.

Back at Moor Park on 17 September 1944, the mansion fell silent. In 1945 it was returned to its members, and golf began again. Twenty years later, a plaque to commemorate the historic events at Moor Park was unveiled on the mansion's portico by Sir Richard Gale, former commander of the 6th Airborne Division. The Arnhem Room, with its Airborne and Parachute Regiment flags, is regularly visited by former and serving soldiers and airmen, and is open for inspection by the general public, who are constantly fascinated by the Arnhem story. 📖

Further information

Moor Park Mansion is open to visitors, individually or in groups, at selected times. Heritage volunteer guides can be booked in advance, and a booklet, *Moor Park and the Battle of Arnhem, 1944*, is available from the golf club.

Tel: 01923 773146

Email: enquiries@moorparkgc.co.uk

VITORIA-GASTEIZ

MHM recommends places of historic interest around the world.

We pay a visit to the beautiful Basque Country and its historic capital city, Vitoria-Gasteiz.

On the evening of 21 June 1813, the city of Vitoria played a leading role in European history. It was the day that Joseph Bonaparte, the brother of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, was defeated by the 'allied' army commanded by the Duke of Wellington, in a battle that took place in a small, little-known city only 100km from the French border. The battle had unimaginable repercussions for Europe.

That city is Vitoria-Gasteiz, capital of the Basque Country. It was founded in the 12th century, and there remain noteworthy testimonies of that period – in the form of various monuments.

In the Alameda Medieval Old Quarter, you will experience history as never before. The Medieval Alameda, so named for its oval shape, is the oldest part of the city, built on a hill in the year 1181. The first recommendation any Vitorian would give you is to visit the Santa María Cathedral. The long restoration of this Gothic cathedral has made it a unique and highly sought-after destination for tourists and lovers of history.

Casco Antiguo is home to a restless cultural avant-garde, one of the latest expressions of which are the murals that have transformed old façades and walls into giant colourful artworks. The 11th-century city walls, BIBAT Museum, Renaissance palaces, and lively squares are other attractions to this area, as well as the vibrant social and cultural life.



If you are interested in contemporary art, do not miss a visit to Artium, the Basque Museum–Centre of Contemporary Art, with its large collection of work by Spanish artists.

Plaza de España is full of terraces and columned porches, and nearby one can enjoy the new cathedral, the Basque Parliament, the Senda Route with its romantic mansions and museums, and the Basilica of San Prudencio in Armentia, one of the Basque Country's emblematic Romanesque churches.

Vitoria-Gasteiz has natural beauty, too. There are more than 100km of urban

trails and bike lanes in the city. They run throughout the city, giving easy links to the Green Belt that provides the natural perimeter to the capital. Some 47km of tracks and trails will take you through the six parks surrounding the urban area. The Salburua wetland has huge lagoons which host herds of deer and thousands of waterfowl. Head to the Ataria interpretation centre to see them all close-up.

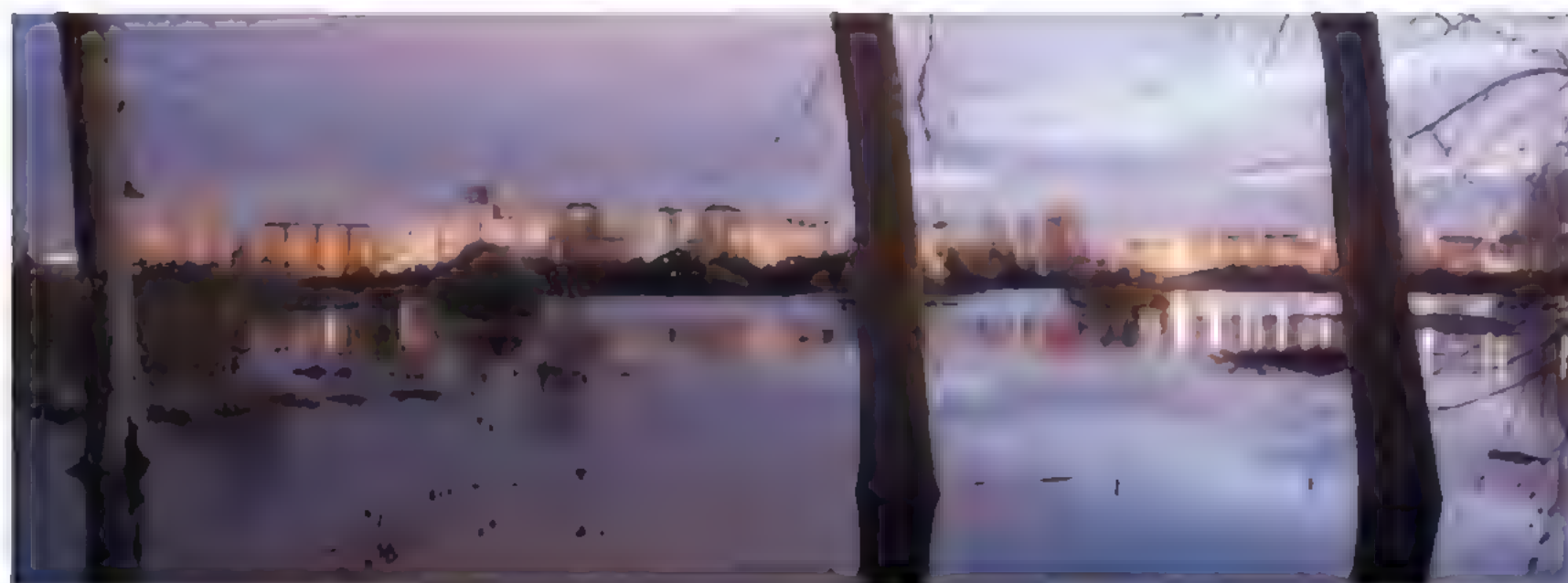
The exquisite food is another reason to visit the city. In the Basque Country, 'Gastronomy' and 'Cuisine' are written in capital letters through every home, each gastronomy club, and every pintxos bar or restaurant. In Vitoria-Gasteiz you can choose to eat at a 15th-century inn, a modern restaurant, or enjoy the authentic experience of delicious pintxos menus. 🍷

Further information

To find out more, visit the **website:**

www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/tourism

Email: turismo@vitoria-gasteiz.org





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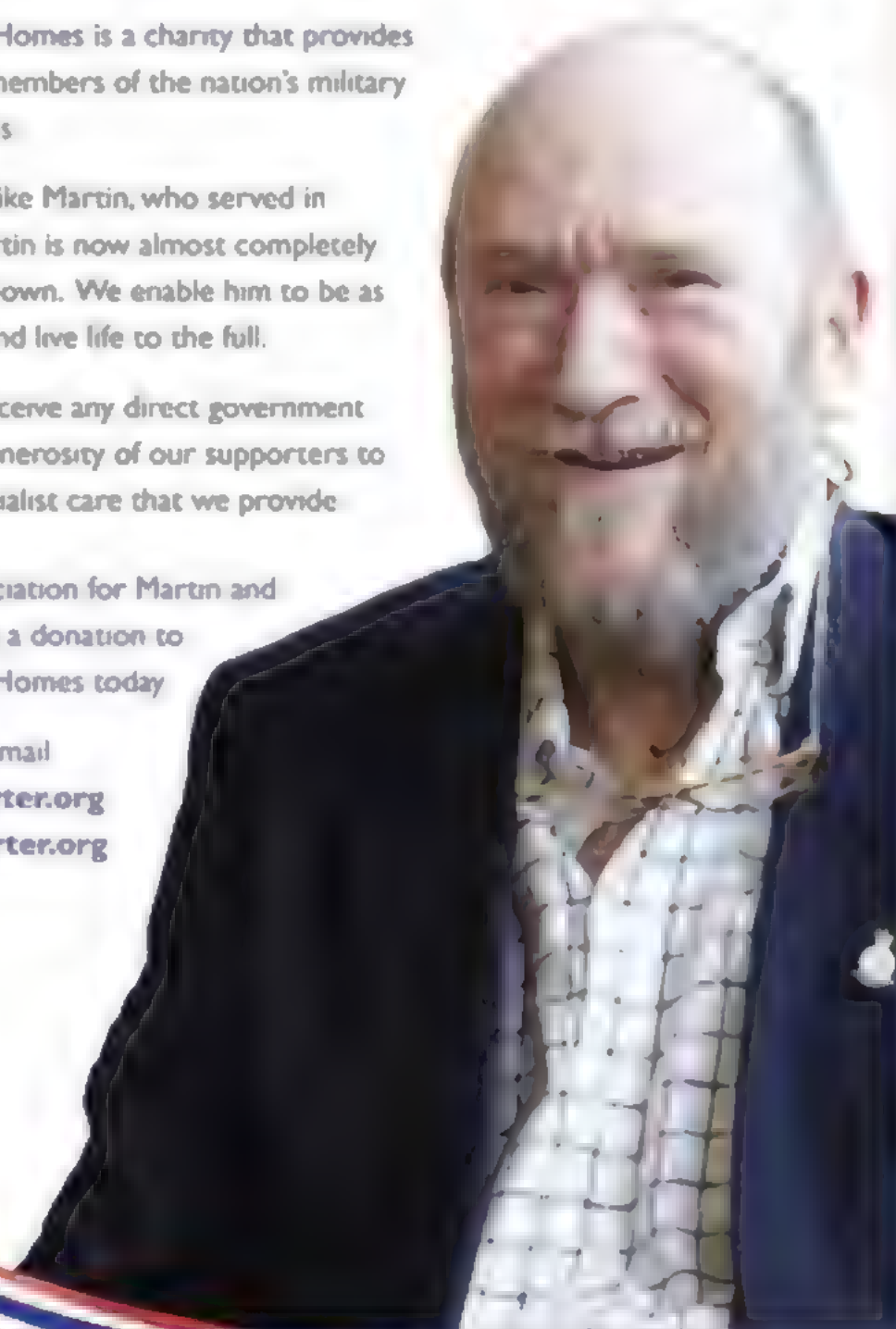
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NOVEMBER 2013

MHMReviews

RECOMMENDED READ | BOOKS | DVD



November In this month's reviews section, we launch a new regular feature: 'Recommended Read'. To get us under way, Mark Corby recommends the new book by Jeremy Paxman, *Great Britain's Great War*, which asks the question: How did the British people really find life during WWI?

Another major new publication about the First World War is covered by Jules Stewart. Saul David's *100 Days to Victory: how the Great War was fought and won* details the unfolding story of the war through episodes that took place on 100 key dates between 1914 and 1918.

For our DVD review, *MHM* looks at Ron Maxwell's *Copperhead*, an American Civil War drama based on the novel by Harold Frederic, which examines how the North-South divide manifested itself in Union territory.



Recommended Read

72



Books

100

74



DVD

PATRIOT TO SOME
TRAITOR TO OTHERS

77

Recommended READ



Jeremy Paxman
Viking, £25
ISBN 978-0670919611

In recent years Jeremy Paxman has established himself as a bestselling author of non-fiction, with seven books that include *The English*, *The Victorians*, and *Empire*. In these works he has developed a style that is perceptive, caustic, opinionated, and yet still highly amusing. His latest offering, *Great Britain's Great War*, is no exception, and he tells us that his decision to write about the Great War was provoked by hearing a secondary schoolteacher set a homework essay entitled 'How does Wilfred Owen show the futility of war?'

Contrary to the perceived wisdom of the modern world – that all war is pointless and that the Great War was the most pointless of all – Paxman seeks to show that this was not the view of the vast majority of the British public, most of whom believed the war, terrible as it was, was something that had to be fought whatever the cost in blood and treasure. In fact, it was a war that would kill more than 720,000 British men, over 528,000 of whom would have no known grave. Perhaps a further million were permanently incapacitated.

Using a plethora of first-hand

sources from virtually every walk of life – generals, soldiers, nurses, vicars, workers, and conscientious objectors – Paxman's incisive panorama paints a very different picture from that portrayed in the 1960s musical *Oh! What a Lovely War*, or even the hilarious 1989 TV comedy *Blackadder Goes Forth*. Thus, early in the work, modern readers may be astonished to hear the 26-year-old Julian Grenfell, Eton and Balliol, poet and soldier, declare 'It is all the best of fun. One loves one's fellow man so much more when one is bent on killing him.'

In contrast, Paxman describes with some pathos his own family's experience, when he discovers the few poignant reminders of his great-uncle Charlie, killed in the Gallipoli fiasco of 1915. In an old cigar box that had belonged to his mother, among a bundle of faded papers, he found the dreaded Army Form B 104-82, announcing his great-uncle's untimely death.

Unavoidable war

The crucial question of why the British never gave up, nor suffered any serious mutinies, unlike many of the other combatants, Paxman answers with the fact that most thought the war unavoidable and even necessary. He does acknowledge that in strictly numerical terms Britain's casualties were proportionally less than those of many of the other combatants. In fact, they were certainly less than those of Imperial Germany, France, Austro-Hungary, and even Italy. Starting a war with an army little larger than Serbia's had some advantages. Indeed, Paxman's main contention is that the world of 1914 – its attitudes, beliefs, and moral certainties – is alien enough to modern audiences as to be almost completely incomprehensible.

The position of the press was pivotal to the conduct of the war, and the treatment of enemy aliens early in the war generated a near-hysterical reaction from the *Daily Mail*, which screamed for 'Extirpation – Root and Branch and Seed – of German control and

influence from the British Empire'. A reader wrote in demanding that the word 'Kindergarten' be 'expelled' from the language! Whether Dachshunds were kicked to death in the street, as urban myth would have it, Paxman does not mention. Other problems with a by-now rampant press would lead Lord Kitchener to order that should the journalist Philip Gibbs of the *Daily Chronicle* be found near the front-line again, he was to be put up against a wall and shot.

The appointment of Alfred Harmsworth, 'the self-made son of an alcoholic', later Lord Northcliffe, as director of propaganda in enemy countries saw the triumphant manipulation of the mass media. Northcliffe had formed an unholy alliance with the astute but totally unprincipled David Lloyd George, which would be rewarded with a viscountcy. But when he demanded a seat at the Versailles peace conference he was rejected – and denounced by Lloyd George as suffering from 'diseased vanity'.

Gallipoli would also provoke a press legacy that still echoes today, when Keith Murdoch, father of Rupert, was summarily arrested *en route* to London for carrying seditious accounts of the disastrous campaign then unfolding.

Paxman's main contention is that the world of 1914 is alien enough to modern audiences as to be almost completely incomprehensible.

GREAT BRITAIN'S GREAT WAR

The subsequent furore generated in Australia by these embarrassing revelations has yet to abate.

Men at the Front

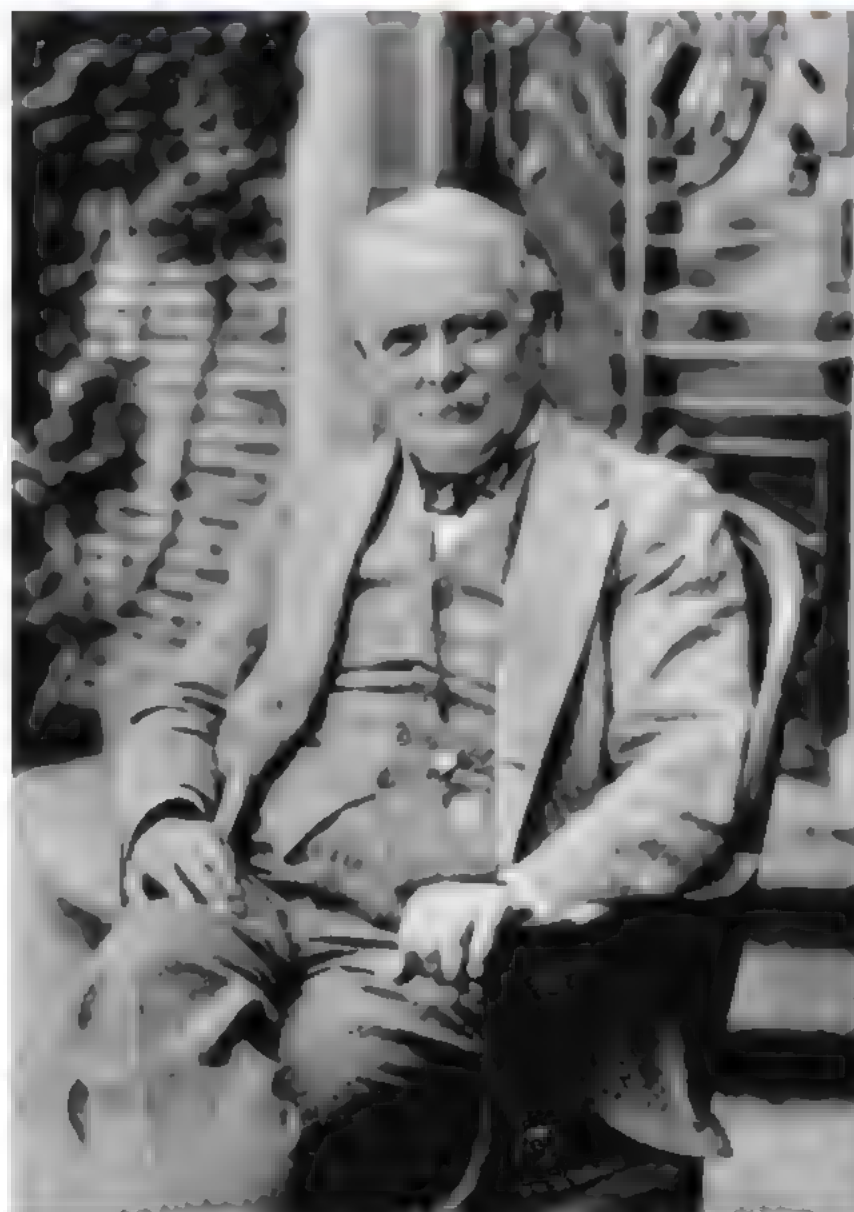
Paxman's survey of the front-line pays due tribute to the outstanding role played by young officers such as Grenfell in supplying leadership at the very front. A subaltern's life was brutally short, mainly due to the fact that they led from the front in any attack. The result was that over 37,500 officers were killed during the war; the vast majority were very young. Initially, officers were the products of the great public schools, inculcated with the spirit to defy normal human instincts. In the initial rush to join the colours in 1914, some 20,557 public schoolboys joined up, joining such regiments as the Artists' Rifles – jocularly referred to as the 'Suicide Club'. By 1916 such were the officer casualties that recruiting from the ranks became essential, and whereas the pre-war army produced only 2% of its officers from the ranks, by 1918 it was 40%.

The writer Alfred Burrage, described by Paxman as a subversive, said it all when he recalled, 'I, who was a private, and a bad one at that, freely own that it was the British subaltern who won the war.' This is not to say that there were not occasional lapses of discipline, and Paxman duly notes one when a sergeant in the Scots Guards politely asked his company officer/subaltern, 'Leave to shoot the prisoners, sir?', and promptly did!

Paxman's inquisitive nature also unearths the sordid fact that some 400,000 soldiers were treated for VD, a surprisingly small figure from an army of 7 million men. Fortunately, the recent discovery of Compound 606, needless to say a German invention, meant that the disease was now treatable. He also recounts that while some 3,000 men were sentenced to death for desertion or cowardice, only just over one in ten sentences were carried out, far less than, for example, the Italian army, which



Above *The Taking of Lone Pine*, by Fred Leist, depicts an attack by the Australian 1st Brigade during the Battle of Gallipoli. This was the battle in which Paxman's great-uncle Charlie was killed. **Left** David Lloyd George was involved in Alfred Harmsworth's mass-media manipulation.



managed to dispatch over a thousand by firing squad.

Some 16,000 conscientious objectors were also tolerated, although in some cases treated harshly. By contrast, the almost forgotten work of the maverick Reverend Tubby Clayton, founder of Toc H, is recalled, particularly the establishment of his retreat house/library/canteen in Poperinghe in 1915. Over the doorway to Clayton's study were inscribed the immortal words, 'Abandon

rank all ye who enter here', while in the garden another sign proclaimed, 'Come into the garden and forget the war'.

Easier said than done, Paxman quips, but it does illustrate his central thesis that the men and women of 1914-1918 were, in many ways, so very different in their outlook and opinions when compared to the indulged and pampered *demos* of the early 21st century. He finishes on a high note: the year 1920 saw the birth of 957,000 new Britons, a total that has not been equalled since. This is a delightful book, full of humour and passion, which has done much to explain how the British Empire fought, endured, and finally won the Great War. 🇬🇧

Mark Corby

Coming next...

Next month, *MHM* Editor Neil Faulkner tackles *Catastrophe*, Max Hastings' new WWI chronicle of calamity.

BOOKS

100 DAYS TO VICTORY: *how the Great War was fought and won*

Saul David

Hodder & Stoughton, £20.00

ISBN 978-1444763355

Saul David has come up with a unique book amid the welter of First World War accounts now beginning to emerge in the run-up to the centenary commemoration of the war to end all wars. Instead of rehashing the gore of the trenches and the often misguided strategy of the Western Front, or simply analysing European political conflicts, or presenting a straight up-and-down beginning-to-end history, we are offered the story through episodes that took place on 100 key days between 1914 and 1918. It is an account of events sometimes beyond the battlefields, in many instances about quite ordinary people whose lives were touched by the war, more often than not with tragic consequences.

One of the most heart-rending of these stories is that of Private Thomas Highgate of the 1st West Kent Regiment.

Six weeks after disembarking in France, this 19-year-old farm labourer's son became the first British soldier of the war to be executed by his own side. The author's unadorned style brings into sharp focus the horror of Highgate's drama. As this confused, rustic farmboy lay dozing in his cell, two men entered, Captain J Monteath accompanied by an army padre. Monteath read from a sheet of paper: 'Private Thomas Highgate... you have been found guilty of desertion by a Field General Court Martial and sentenced to suffer death by being shot.' While Highgate struggled to take in these terrible words, the officer informed him that the sentence would be carried out in 45 minutes. 'He then left the room.'

As simple as that, only the Court's verdict and Highgate's execution left open a number of questions that will never be answered. Was Highgate's conviction sound? In September 1914 he had been subjected to a terrific artillery bombardment at the Battle of Mons and had taken part in desperate fighting at Le Cateau. Highgate then went missing from his battalion and was discovered on a farm in civilian clothes. It didn't

look good, for this bewildered youth could not explain why he had discarded his weapon and uniform. But with 'almost indecent haste' Highgate was pronounced fit for trial. 'By modern standards, Highgate was the victim of rough justice,' David contends. The Army was keen to make an example of him to he became the first of 309 British and Empire soldiers to be executed for military offences. It took 92 years for the Government to grant these men a posthumous pardon, with the notation in Highgate's file 'that execution was not a fate he deserved'.

Highgate's death was no less tragic than a similar fate suffered by an entire family, albeit far more high-profile victims: the murder of Tsar Nicholas II and his entire family in July 1918. In gruesome detail, David recounts the imperial

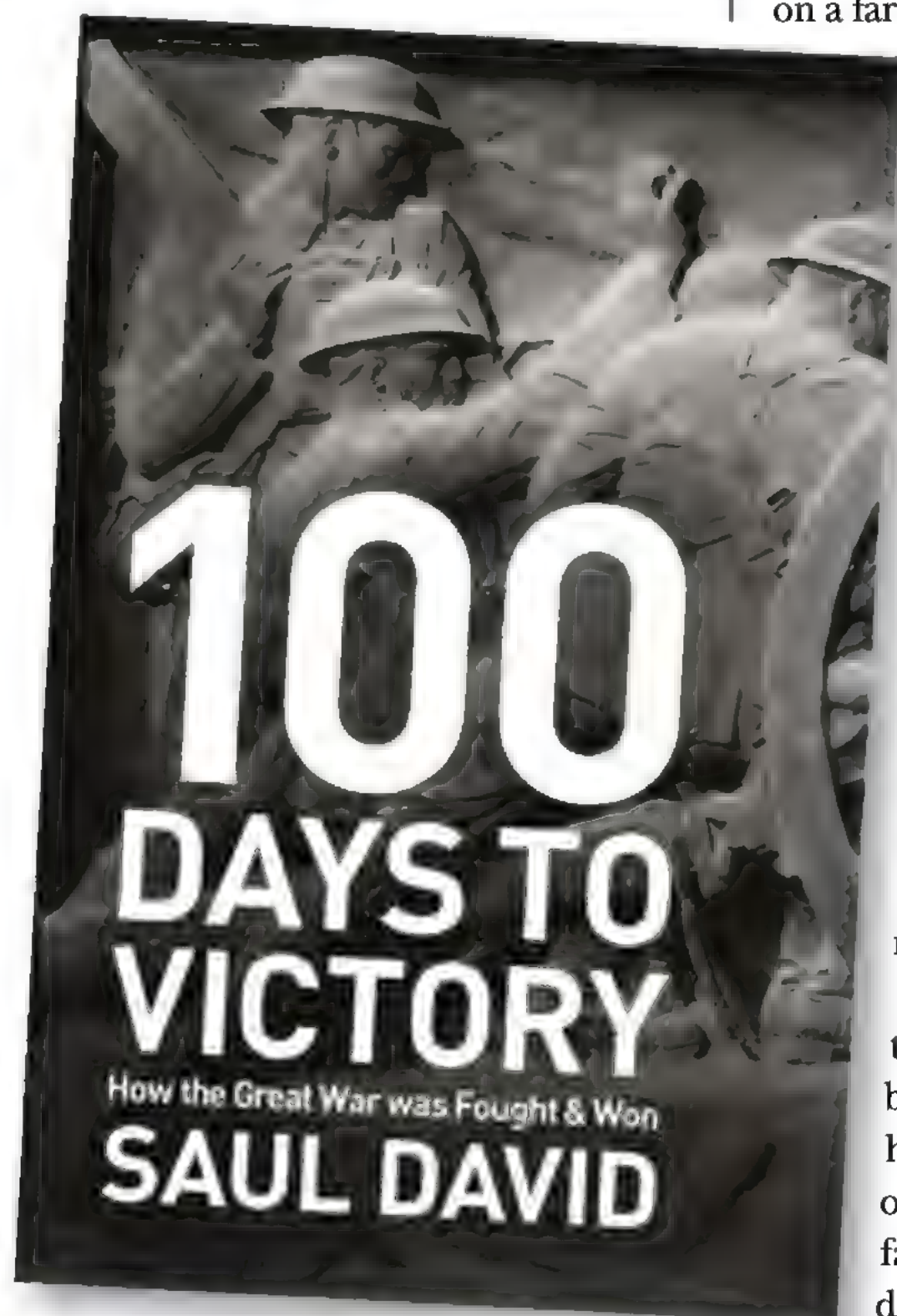
Six weeks after disembarking, this 19-year-old became the first British soldier of the war to be executed by his own side.

family's final hours, their shock and disbelief when the death sentence was read out, the brutal gunning down and coups de grace given to the tsar's dying children. We read with horror how after the massacre, the Bolshevik killers came back into the room to deal with those who were still groaning or shrieking. In a few pages, the author goes through the diabolical Bolshevik machinations that scotched any hopes of saving the Romanovs, at the end quoting Orlando Figes' assessment, 'Nicholas had to die so that Soviet power could live.'

The book takes us, year by year, to different theatres of war. The British humiliation at Kut-al-Amara after a five-month siege by the Turks is described with eloquence. We read of the escapades of the Dutch-born dancer and spy 'Mata Hari', the infamous Zimmerman Telegram which made the US entry into the war all but inevitable, the first aerial bombing of mainland Britain at Folkestone, to name a few of the events and people. They are brought to life in lively, chapters, most of which end with an assessment of where the belligerent powers stood strategically in the war.

If any criticism is to be levelled at this book, one could argue that bringing the illustrations together in a single glossy plate section or two would have a greater impact than a scattering of illustrations throughout the pages.

Jules Stewart



The True German: the diary of a World War II military judge

Werner Otto Müller-Hill

Palgrave Macmillan, £15.99

ISBN 978-1137278548



Since the end of the Second World War, numerous diaries from the conflict have been published. Not all are significant from a historical perspective.

This diary provides a unique insight into conditions in the Wehrmacht and Germany during the final stages of the conflict. The author served as a military judge and is therefore well placed to record how the fall of the Nazi regime was perceived within the army. It covers the period from March 1944 until June 1945.

Müller-Hill first served as a military judge during the First World War. In 1940 he was recalled to the Wehrmacht to resume his judicial duties. The role of military judges within Nazi Germany has come under intense scrutiny in recent decades. The maintenance of discipline within the armed forces was integral to the Nazi worldview and the Wehrmacht judges played a key role. As the introduction notes, judges approved over 30,000 death sentences during the conflict. Yet Müller-Hill was not a severe judge, nor was he closely linked to the Nazi regime. He was rehabilitated soon after the end of the war and returned to civilian legal practice. Throughout this diary he affirms his commitment to sparing soldiers from the worst punishments and criticises his colleagues who sought the harshest sentences. Müller-Hill also notes the ludicrous nature of military justice as the Wehrmacht began to fragment and the pursuit of deserters was impossible.

Müller-Hill took a considerable risk in writing the diary. As he himself notes, its discovery would inevitably have led to his arrest by the Gestapo. His self-proclaimed motive was a desire to record the closing stages of the conflict for his young son. Müller-Hill may also have had an ulterior motive in that documenting his lenient tendencies and political beliefs would act as evidence on his behalf during any post-war trial. Certainly, his hatred for the Nazi regime is clear in every entry. Müller-Hill displays particular vehemence against the Party leadership. He frequently mocks the illogical nature

of Nazi propaganda and the idiocy of those who believed it as the Third Reich collapsed. Rumours of superweapons capable of reversing the Allied advance are a particular focus for his ridicule.

Some of the entries are almost prophetic in nature, particularly in predicting the Cold War. Müller-Hill was worried about the potential growth of a new stab-in-the-back myth which would form the nucleus of any underground resistance movement. Dismayed at the failure of the attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944, he noted that the involvement of army officers could be shaped by the Nazis into an explanation for their defeat. Müller-Hill displays an understanding of the atrocities of the Holocaust through information received from army colleagues employed in the mechanics of genocide. Yet his responses are strangely muted and often reflect on his fears that retribution would be visited upon the German people, rather than the monstrous crimes of the Nazi regime.

This diary will be a valuable source for anyone interested in the fall of the Third Reich.

Jonathan Eaton

The Red Effect

Harvey Black

SilverWood Books, £8.99

ISBN 978-1-78132-088-4



It is refreshing this year to see the release of a military history book that does not deal with the First World War. It is likewise fascinating to read a fictionalised account of what nearly became the Third World War, for in the case of the Cold War it is often difficult to separate fact from fiction. The horrors of the McCarthyism period and its witch-hunt, the ever present fear of a Soviet nuclear strike against the US, and President John F Kennedy's frightening brinksmanship in the Cuban missile crisis – all of which this reviewer lived through – could have been scripted into any of today's apocalyptic action movies.

Harvey Black's war time thrillers are a testament to the detailed research he puts into each volume. We are fortunate to receive this Cold War saga from the pen of a veteran of British Army Intelligence who served on the frontline of US-Soviet sabre-rattling and intrigue in Communist East Berlin,

where he experienced his own personal encounter with KGB brutality. The Cold War element in Black's army experience consisted of intelligence-gathering in East Berlin during the 1980s, where he was dragged from his vehicle and attacked by KGB soldiers, and covert surveillance in West Germany against KGB, Spetsnaz sleepers, and the like.

Black's familiarity with the military hardware described in the book makes it a highly authentic and persuasive read. The author spins an intriguing yarn. The narrative is fast-paced and hard-hitting: 'A burst transmission came through about a minute ago. I'll leave you to decode. Anything? "Yep. Polish tank battalion." "This is getting bad." "Well?" Bradley's silence said it all. "They've closed off Berlin and launched an attack into West Germany."'

This episode comes at the end of the *The Red Effect*, the first in the author's Cold War trilogy, which will trace the more than 40-year conflict as it simmers, overheats, and eventually turns East against West. The three books cover the hypothetical invasion of the Federal Republic of Germany by the Warsaw Pact in the mid-1980s. *The Red Effect* tells the story of part of the intelligence build-up leading to the initial Warsaw Pact strike against the NATO forces lined up against them.

The perception of a potential Third World War, 'was generally one of a nuclear war,' Black explains. 'It may have come to that. In reality we will never know. But one scenario is that of a conventional war. The scenario is that of the massed forces of the Warsaw Pact against what everyone assumed to be the technically superior, though in fact weaker, NATO armies, a confrontation that may well have escalated into a nuclear exchange. But a pure conventional war was just as likely.'

Our heroes Jacko and Bradley, along with their allies, fight off the Soviet Union with all the derring-do of a *Boy's Own* tale crafted for adults. Can the NATO forces recover and hold their ground? Will the Soviet Union succeed? Or will it end in an outright defeat for the West? Now read on. The second in the trilogy, *The Black Effect* continues to explore the 'what if' scenario, and the author says the third and final volume, *The Blue Effect*, 'is already poised at the tip of my pen. It will be bloody and longer, finishing off my Cold War trilogy with a bang!'

Jules Stewart

ON THE HORIZON

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Anne Powell

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Wellington's Guns: the untold story of Wellington and his artillery in the Peninsula and at Waterloo

Nick Lipscombe

Osprey, £25

ISBN 978-1780961149

Using extensive research and first-hand accounts, Lipscombe argues that despite Wellington's brilliance as a field commander, it was his uncompromising leadership style towards his artillery commanders that really shaped the Napoleonic Wars.



Secret Weapons

Brian J Ford

Osprey Publishing, £9.99

ISBN 978-1780967219



While war is the undoubted mother of invention, it is also a key accelerator for nascent technologies that have foundered between drawing

board and realisation. This is a recurring theme of Brian J Ford's enjoyable book, which explores how technologies closely associated with WWII were developed and continue to play a role in modern life, but whose genes often pre-date that conflict.

Ford, a prolific author and host of scientific TV programmes, is not afraid to challenge popular myths. He shows how radar, often cited as a British invention prompted by the urgency of war, was first used by a German radio engineer in 1904. Its military application did not materialise for another 30 years, when British scientists found it could be adapted to spot planes from a distance.

Ford also shows how the pioneering work of the Bletchley Park code-breakers actually started in pre-war Poland. The Enigma machine, far from being a top-secret encrypting device, had been available by mail-order since the early 1920s. In 1928 the Polish intelligence service intercepted a machine sent by the German government to its legation in Warsaw. This subsequently enabled them to decrypt German military communications up to the outbreak of war, by which time Poland had passed its codes and equipment to the British, a move that proved invaluable to the formation of Bletchley Park's secret operations.

Ford is particularly strong on narrative, savouring the detail behind the development and deployment of doodlebugs and observational gyrogliders alike. His background as a scientist also makes him compelling when addressing chemical warfare, jet planes, and rockets. However, as a writer he can be repetitious, often labouring the point. There is also a disappointing lack of footnotes and some errors: the first Zeppelin raid on Britain did not take place in January 1914, and *Star Wars* was not a Stephen (sic) Spielberg film.

Otherwise, *Secret Weapons* is an informed, accessible, and entertaining analysis of what continues to be a fascinating subject.

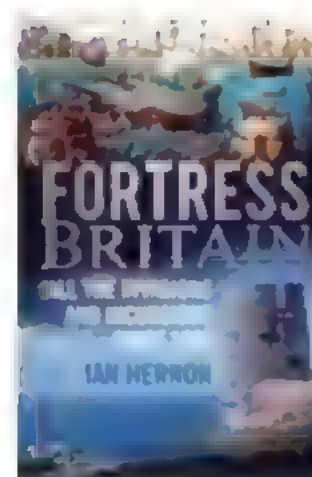
Curtis Hutchinson

Fortress Britain

Ian Herson

History Press, £14.99

ISBN 978-0752497129



There is a commonly held perception that there has not been a successful invasion of Britain since 1066. *Fortress Britain* (not to be confused with Andrew

Saunders' 1989 book of the same name) sets out to debunk this myth, and does so in style. As Ian Herson points out, since the Norman Conquest, Britain has been threatened by invasion on numerous occasions, has been subject to countless raids and attacks, and has been successfully invaded twice. All these are considered alongside the defence of Britain and, importantly, he highlights how the weather – the so-called 'Protestant wind' – has saved this country on many occasions.

Herson includes the well-known attempts (the 1588 Spanish Armada and Operation Seelöwe in 1940) and successful invasions (Henry Tudor in 1485 and William of Orange in 1688, the latter in more detail than the former). But more fascinating are the less well known and the quite frankly obscure, none more so than one of the final subjects in the book: the 'Battle' of Graveney Marsh in September 1940.

His analysis of the Spanish Armada is good, and he rightly makes comparison with the French 'Armada' of 1692, potentially a more serious threat. The latter is among a number of lesser-known invasion attempts described, while Mousehole in 1595 and Kilcummin, County Mayo, in 1798 are just two of several actual landings Herson drags from relative obscurity.

He makes a strong case for the inclusion of Prince Louis the Lion of France as a king of England (he invaded England in support of the Barons against King John in 1216, and was actually proclaimed king in London), while his telling of the French raids on coastal towns during the Hundred Years' War is far more balanced than a recent military history of the conflict.

There are one or two minor oversights (and the addition of a few maps would have benefited the book), but the only real surprise is the omission of the Monmouth Rebellion and the landing at Lyme Regis in 1685. But this is only a slight distraction from what is an informative and thoroughly enjoyable book about an overlooked aspect of British history. Highly recommended.

David Flintham

DVD

COPPERHEAD



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This American Civil War drama deals with the lost topic of how the North-South divide manifested itself on small scales throughout Union territory. It is not a subject we have seen tackled in many (if any) films before, and with Ron Maxwell of *Gettysburg* and *Gods and Generals* fame at the helm, there was plenty to be excited about.

One year into the war, upstate New York farmer Abner Beech (played by Billy Campbell) has begun to question the moral reasons for which his town's people are dying. He is anti-slavery, but refuses to fight in a war so destructive and damaging to his fellow man and his nation.

His political stance leads him and similarly minded farmhands to be branded 'Copperheads' (venomous snakes), an offensive slang term used during the war to describe peace Democrats, those who lived in the North but who opposed the war, pressed for ceasefire, and opposed the draft. One of the people bandying the insult 'Copperhead' around freely is Jee Hagadorn, a ranting, intolerant

abolitionist whose daughter is embroiled in a love affair with Abner's head-strong son Jeff.

This *Romeo and Juliet*-esque sub-plot nicely breaks up the rather lengthy scene shots, the long passages of monologue presented in the form of sermons, and the songs, almost always played in their entirety. Attempting to encapsulate the 19th-century American 'towny' feel, Maxwell often goes over the top. The various long-winded debates and drawn-out – if beautifully shot – cinematography get in the way of any concrete story-line.

Abner's small farming community becomes a microcosm of the rest of the United States, divided in their politics and vehement in their disagreements.

Friends turn against friends and, yes, son turns against father when, following Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the impetuous young Jeff defies his father and enlists in the Union Army.

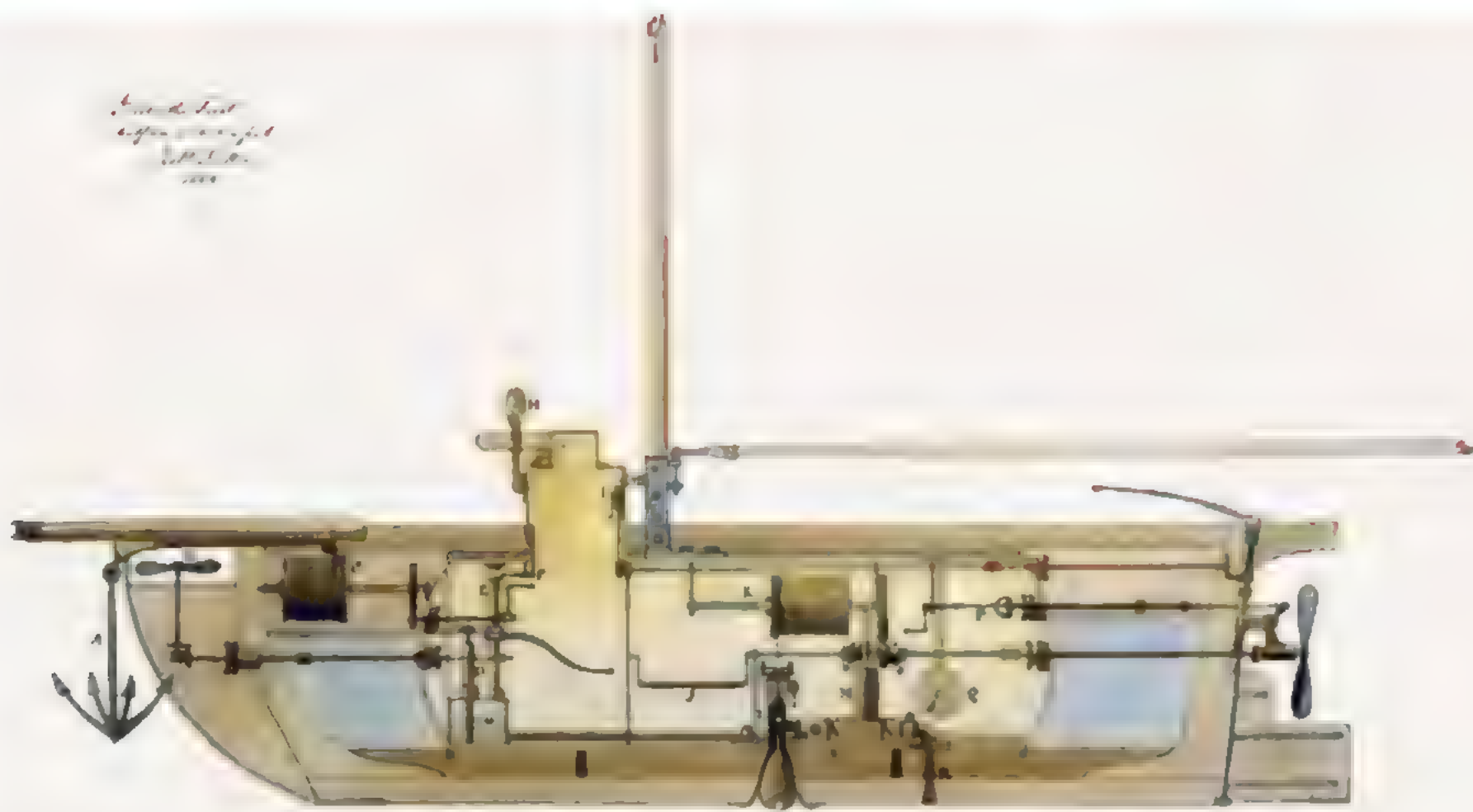
I thought perhaps the roly-poly pace of the film would be countered by the odd battle scene, a skirmish here and there. After having seen the incredible action which made *Gettysburg* such an engrossing watch, I was hoping for an injection of that energy to liven *Copperhead* up a bit. Maxwell clearly had other ideas. Keen to keep away from any large battlefield sequences, he remains firmly fixed to the 'war at home', focusing solely on the way the conflict impacts upon this small community. Apart from one minor village scuffle, the only conflicts appear in the intelligently written but painfully long verbal disputes.

It is a shame that the film fell slightly short of the mark. Where films like *Lincoln*, similarly focused on the political nature of the American Civil War, became box-office hits, *Copperhead* did not really register. The subject matter is important and, given that people will be disagreeing on the subject of war *ad infinitum*, it is absolutely relevant. But for all the accurate colloquialisms, and all the whimsical music accompanying shots of the golden crop fields, *Copperhead* is unfortunately a sluggish depiction of a neglected chapter in American history. **GC**



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Retired scientist **Allan Ashworth** uncovers Napoleon Bonaparte's secret weapons programme.



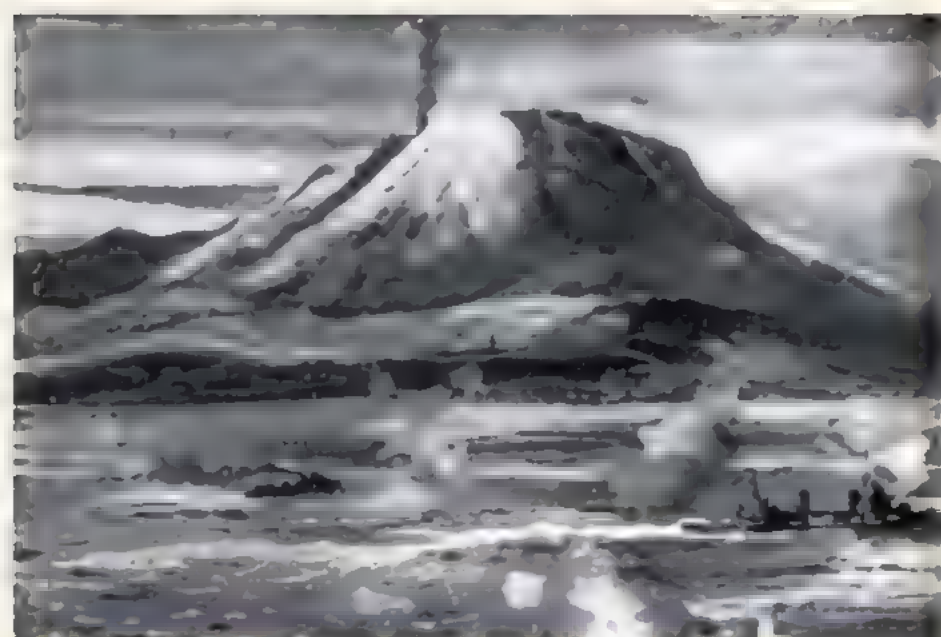
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Jules Stewart analyses the wave of tribal rebellions on British India's North-West Frontier in the 1890s.



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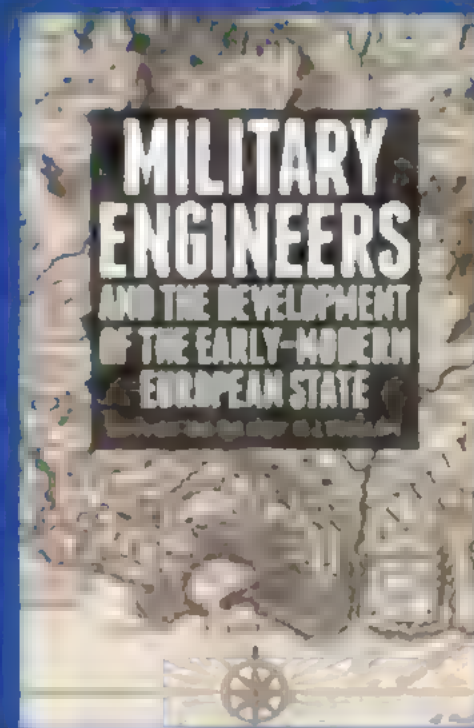
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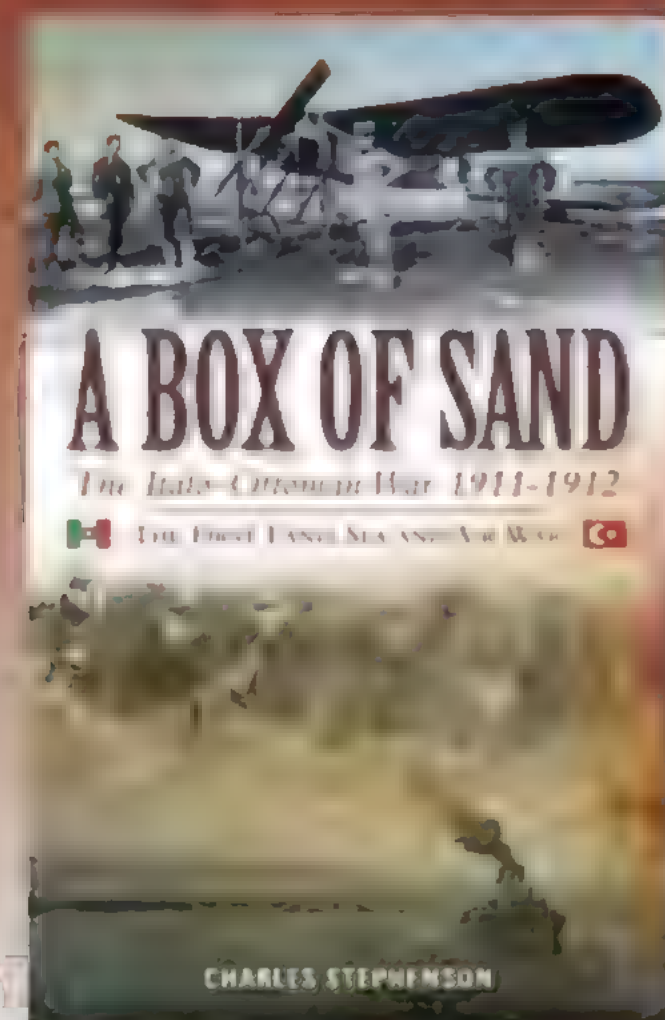
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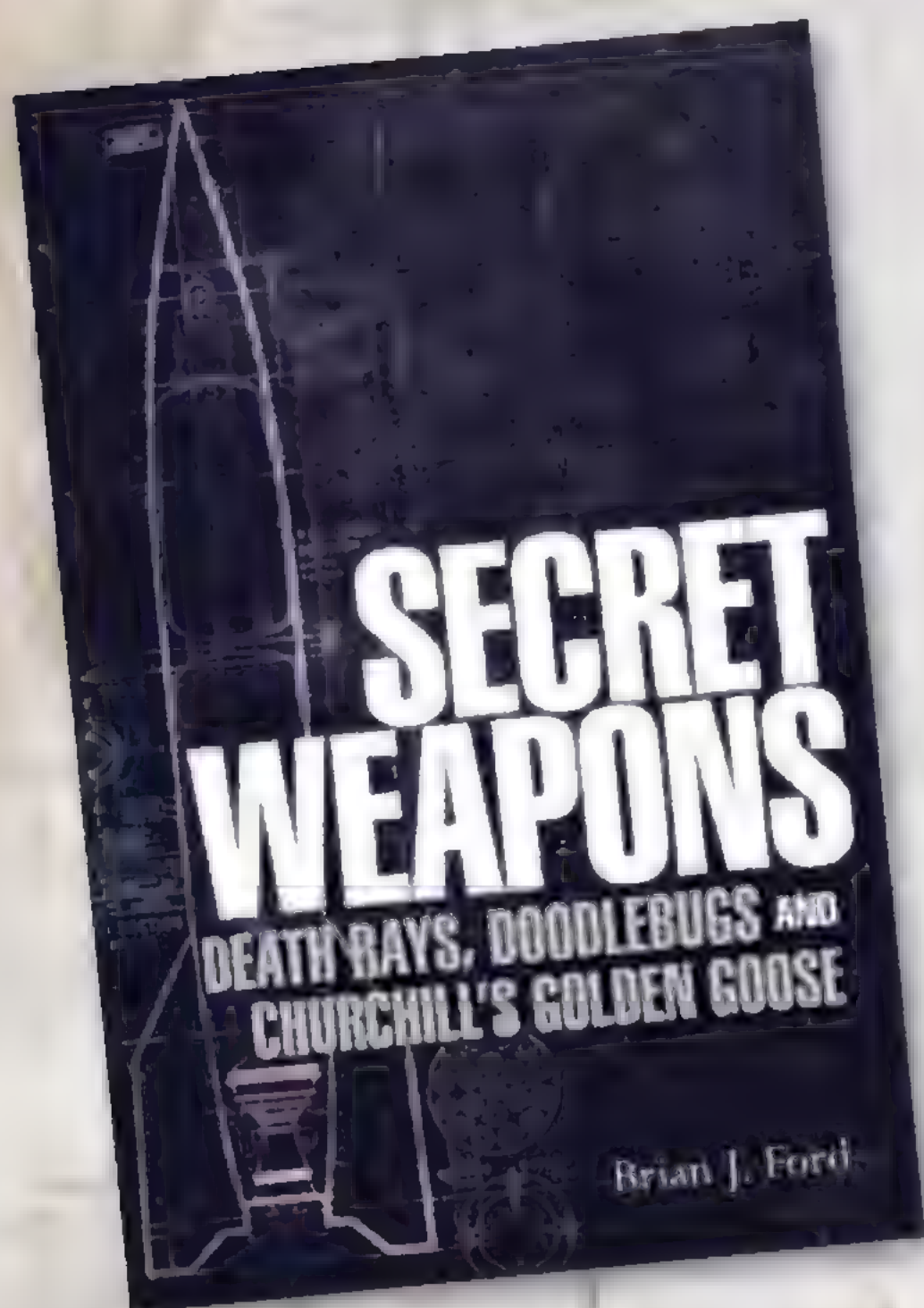


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Brian J Ford

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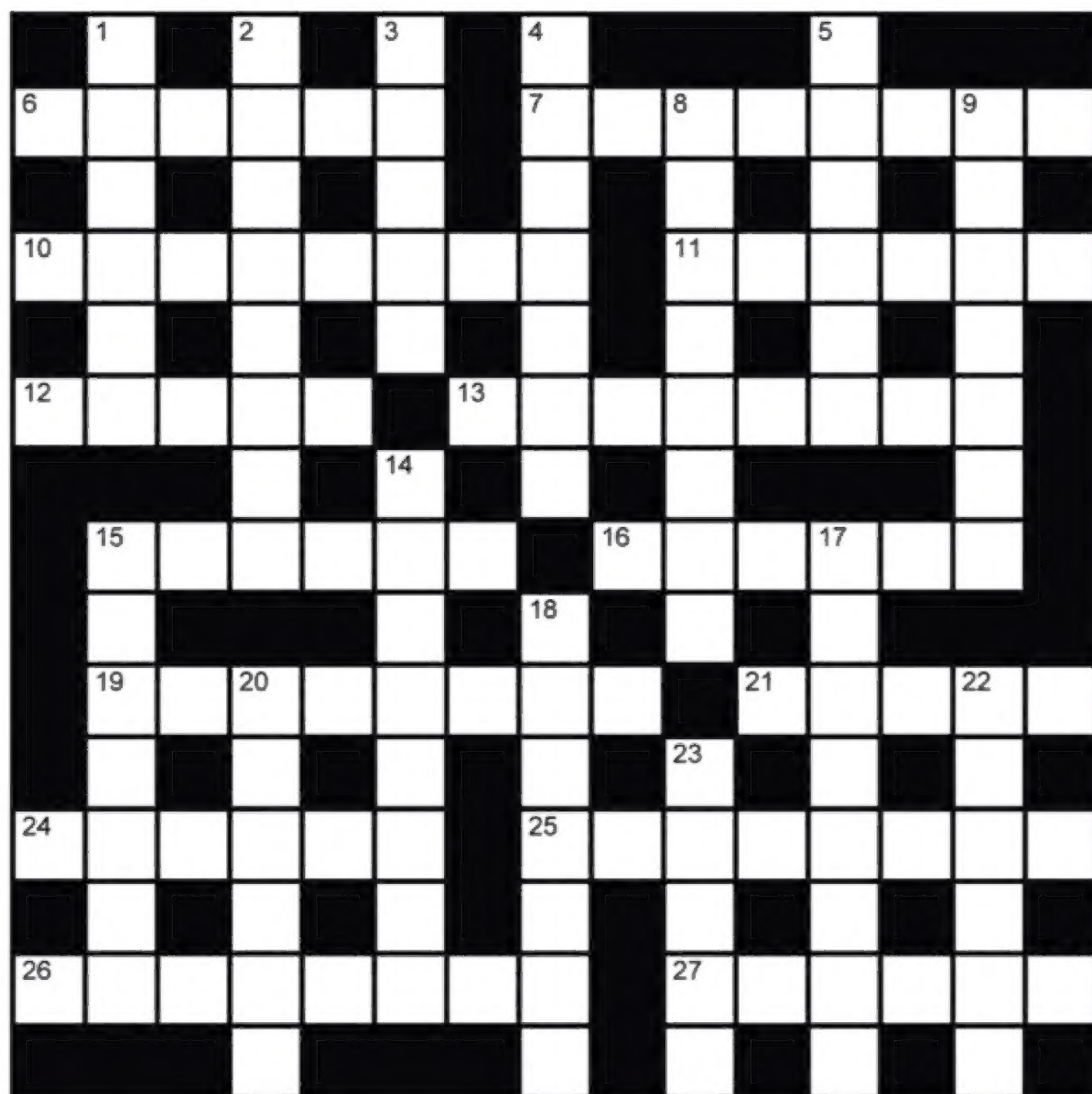
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3. Who were 'the geese that laid the golden eggs – but never cackled'?

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MHM CROSSWORD

Test your military history knowledge in our regular crossword.
The answers will be revealed in next month's issue of *MHM*.

ACROSS

- 6 Sir Charles ____, commander of the Royal Navy's Baltic fleet during the Crimean War (6)
- 7 "Bloody" Bill ____, Confederate guerilla leader killed in battle in October 1864 (8)
- 10 Battle which took place in November 1812 during Napoleon's retreat from Moscow (8)
- 11 Kingdom of medieval Italy conquered by Alfonso V of Aragon in 1442 (6)
- 12 Japanese city which suffered devastation during the Onin War in the fifteenth century (5)
- 13 Non-commissioned officer (8)
- 15 Battle of the Wars of the Roses in which Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, was killed (6)
- 16 Portable bridge developed for use in World War Two (6)
- 19 Soldier equipped with a particular type of light musket (8)
- 21 Organisation which fought the MPLA during the civil war in Angola (5)
- 24 ____ Entente, signed in September 1934 by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (6)
- 25 Edmund ____, Chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1939 to 1940 (8)
- 26 Russian city on the river Don captured by German forces in July 1942 (8)
- 27 ____ Swordfish, biplane nicknamed the "Stringbag" (6)

DOWN

- 1 English Civil War battle fought on 14th June 1645 (6)
- 2 ____ General, rank equivalent to Field Marshal in the British army (4-4)

- 3 ____ Cailloch, fifteenth century battle fought between the clans Cameron and Mackintosh (5)
- 4 Spanish city besieged and captured by English and Portuguese troops in March to April 1812 (7)
- 5 William ____, British army officer who, with Admiral Cornish, led the forces that captured Manila in October 1762 (6)
- 8 Alexander ____, colonel of volunteers in the Mexican-American War, present at the capture of Santa Fe (8)
- 9 Andreas ____ von Ballinlough, Irish-born soldier who joined the Austrian army in 1756 and later became General of Cavalry (7)
- 14 British admiral in command at the Battle of Jutland (8)
- 15 ____ Soldiers, name given to black US troops by tribes of the Great Plains (7)
- 17 Viking craft (8)
- 18 City on the West Bank occupied by Israeli forces during the Six Day War in 1967 (7)
- 20 John ____, 1st Baron Dudley, an ally of the future Edward IV at the Battle of Towton (6)
- 22 Marshal of the RAF, deputy to Eisenhower during Operation Overlord (6)
- 23 British general killed during the capture of Quebec in 1759 (5)

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We continue our caption competition with an image from our Maori Dawn feature. Pit your wit against *MHM* readers at www.military-history.org/competitions.

WINNER:

Commander, I thought you gave up smoking those American cigarettes. That is correct soldier, but it is times like these when I really Mustafa Kemal.
Mick Wyatt

RUNNERS-UP:



And a double lamb kebab with french fries, but no chilli sauce, it's hotting up around here enough here as it is.
Lawrence Anderson

So sir, let me confirm your statement. You are saying that that the man who attacked you was wearing a long white robe and carried a gun on his right shoulder. Would you be prepared to attend an identity line up?

Kim Styles

Think you can do better?

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ANSWERS OCTOBER ISSUE | MHM 37

ACROSS 6 Oudenarde, 8 Benin, 9 Steenkirk, 10 Poilu, 12 Brno, 13 Chichester, 14 Gardner, 16 Alfonso, 19 George Bush, 21/13D Dick Cheney, 23 E-boat, 24 Fetterman, 26 Brady, 27 St Nazaire.
DOWN 1 Custer, 2 Hereford, 3 Jack, 4 Selous, 5 Villiers, 7 Darwin, 11 Shiloh, 15 Adelbert, 17 Omdurman, 18 Rupert, 20 Rwanda, 22 Claire, 25 Toad.

‘Beaverette’ armoured car – slow on the uptake

Newspaper magnate Lord Beaverbrook was appointed Minister of Aircraft Production by Churchill in May 1940. At the time, German forces were advancing rapidly through France towards the Channel coast, and the invasion of England was a clear and present danger. Beaverbrook decided that Home Guard personnel would need armoured cars to protect aircraft factories, and commissioned the Standard Motor Company of Coventry to produce a specially designed vehicle. Officially designated the Standard Car 4x2, or Car Armoured Light Standard, it was better known as the ‘Beaverette’.

At the time, British car manufacturers were adapting existing saloon-car designs to produce a type of pick-up truck for the armed forces, generally referred to as a ‘Tilly’ (short for ‘utility vehicle’). To create the ‘Beaverette’, this concept was taken to the next level by mounting an armour-plated hull on the Flying 14 saloon-car chassis. Converting a car to a pick-up truck is one thing, but adding 11mm steel plates and backing them with 3-inch thick oak planks has a dramatic effect on a vehicle’s weight. Standard’s 46hp petrol engine struggled to cope with the two-ton ‘Beaverette’, and had to be fitted with a double-reduction back axle

Painfully slow, the ‘Beaverette’ was an incredible 21mph slower than the Rolls-Royce armoured car of 1914.

Top ‘Beaverette’ scout cars, Bren-gun carriers, and motorcycles of 53rd Battalion The Reconnaissance Corps during manoeuvres at Ballykinlar in Northern Ireland, 19 June 1941.

Right Mk II ‘Beaverette’ light reconnaissance cars, manned by the Home Guard in the Highlands of Scotland.

to propel it. As a result, the ‘Beaverette’ was painfully slow: maximum speed was just 24mph, compared to the 50mph top speed of the contemporary Morris Light Reconnaissance Car. Incredibly, the ‘Beaverette’ was 21mph slower than the Rolls-Royce armoured car of 1914.

Armoured cars are intended for use in reconnaissance, command, control, and communications roles. In some cases they are used to protect soft-skinned vehicles in a convoy. A slow armoured car, particularly one that could not out-run enemy tanks of the time (the Panzerkampfwagen II was capable of 25mph on roads) was of no military use.

However, the impracticality of the ‘Beaverette’ was not its only failing. Most of the British Army’s armoured vehicles had been abandoned at Dunkirk. At this critical moment, valuable armour-plating was being diverted from tank production to be used on an armoured car that was ultimately pointless.

‘The whole thing was fantastic’, wrote Field Marshal Alanbrooke, the commander of home forces. ‘How could individual factories have held out, and what part could they have played once the main battle for the country was lost?’

Fortunately, Hitler postponed his invasion plans in September 1940, and the capability of the ‘Beaverette’ was never put to the test. Although 2,800 ‘Beaverettes’ were produced, they were only ever used for home defence and training, which shows how little faith the military authorities had in this armoured car’s suitability for a combat role. Meanwhile, the Morris Light Reconnaissance Car saw service throughout the Middle East and Western Europe, and 76 Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars saw action in the Western Desert, Iraq, and Syria. You can see both a ‘Beaverette’ and a Morris LRV – and compare the two designs – at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford. 🇬🇧

Dan Sager

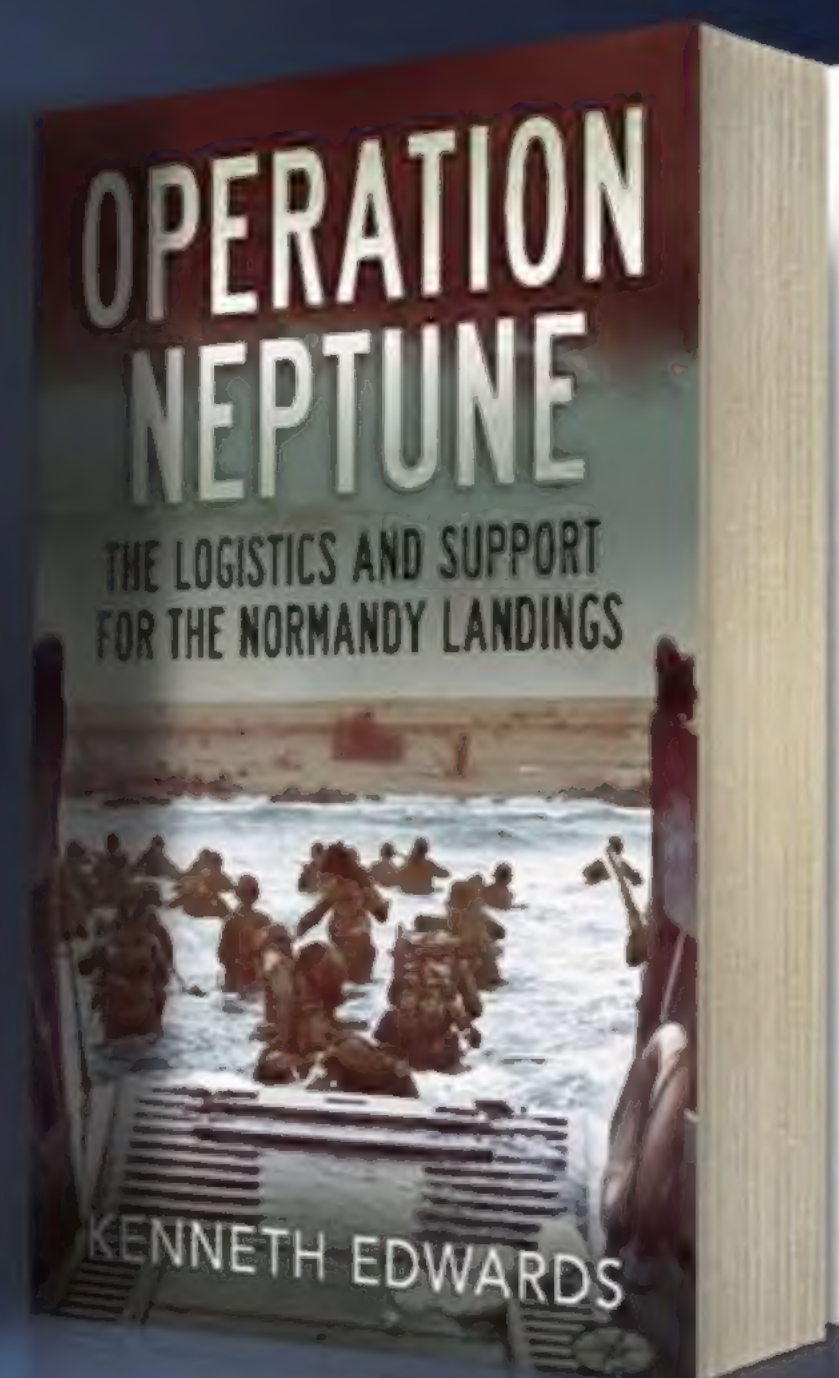
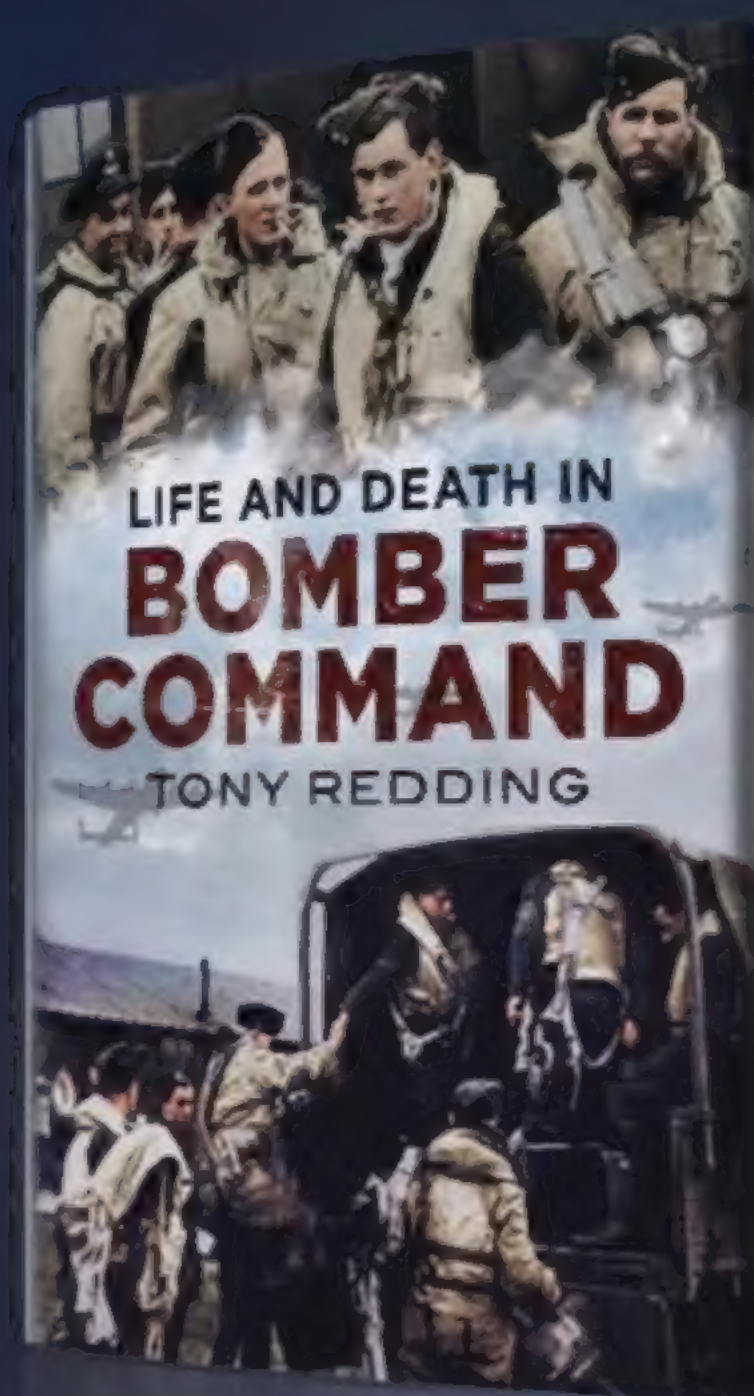


Below A ‘Beaverette’ armoured car at RAF Duxford.

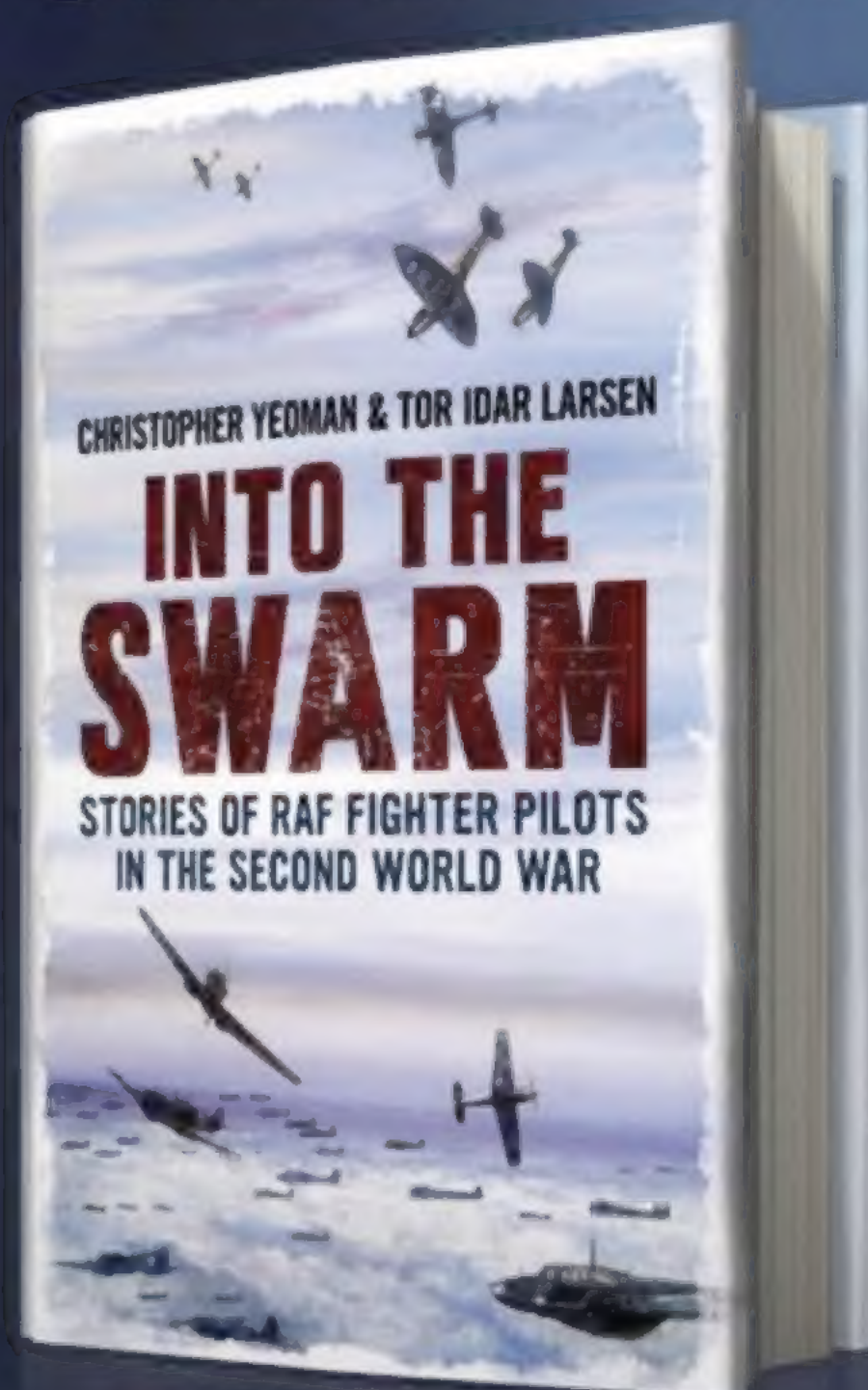


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